

A Convert- Pastor Explains

Rev. J. R. Buck

A lucid and satisfying explanation of the principles of belief and morality and practice of the Catholic Church. The author himself a convert writes so interestingly that the inquiring reader has every incentive to complete the book and to seek further information.

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*With a Foreword by
Rev. Edwin O'Hara, LL.D.*

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FOREWORD

REV. EDWIN V. O'HARA, LL. D.

The universal interest in religion is revealed by the unexpected occasions on which it becomes the subject of conversation. Man is incurably religious, and its problems though seemingly forgotten or neglected are never far from the surface of consciousness. A casual companion on a railway car or in a waiting room will engage one in religious discussion without apology or pretext. And happy the Catholic who is able to give a lucid and satisfying explanation of the principles or practices of the Church which are brought into question. But often, even when there is capacity for giving such instruction, time is lacking to enter into the necessary detail. On such occasions, one would be glad to have a satisfactory booklet to recommend to the inquirer, or even to send to his address. There are, of course, large volumes of instruction, but they will not be read until genuine interest has been thoroughly aroused. And there are smaller treatises, but few of them are written in a manner to capture and hold the attention. What we desire on such an occasion, is something

which creates interest by its manner or narration as well as satisfies the mind with its matter. Such a treatise is Father Buck's "A Convert-Pastor Explains." The poet has said that "Truth embodied in a tale shall enter in at lowly doors." The seeker for truth who takes up this little volume will not lay it down for lack of interest.

Father Buck was admirably fitted to compose such a work, for he is a convert and that is the significance of the title. For many years he made his way by chance inquiry to a fuller and finally a complete knowledge of the Catholic religion. He knows from experience the doubts and difficulties which fill the non-Catholic mind. Hence, he writes with sympathetic understanding. The non-Catholic inquirer will find himself traveling with a pleasant companion in the pages of this booklet written by a convert.

INTRODUCTION

In the belief that a touch of personality in a work of this kind is beneficial, I shall offer no apology for referring to myself, trusting my readers to acquit me of the charge of egotism. I think I appreciate quite thoroughly the position of the average non-Catholic or Protestant, for I was once not only a Protestant, but an anti-Catholic of a deep hue. I even objected to the term "non-Catholic," not crediting the gentleness of the Catholic in applying that term rather than that of Protestant—one who protests against Catholic faith. I thought Catholics used the term non-Catholic to imply in a subtle way that all but Catholics were excluded from salvation—though I certainly did not care to be in the same heaven with Catholics.

*I was a Protestant in the real sense of the word, for I was young, exceedingly acute in my own estimation, and even arrogant in a knowledge which I did not possess. However, I believe with it all, I was honest in my bigotry,

*The Diet of the Holy Roman Empire, in 1529, resolved that, according to a decree promulgated at the Diet of Worms, communities in which the new religion was so far established that it could not without great trouble be

and sincere in my hatred of the Catholic Church. I think I was always religiously inclined, and wanted to know the truth. I saw dozens and dozens of religious denominations and sects of Protestantism all about me. I attended various churches and revival meetings, but I could never bring myself to a point where I was thoroughly satisfied with any particular branch of Protestantism.

My parents were Presbyterian, but never objected to my going to other churches—provided they were neither Catholic nor Unitarian. I was not a philosopher and had difficulty in distinguishing between logic and sophism. Natural religion attracted me, but I knew little or nothing about supernatural religion. I early recognized that it was the personality of the preacher, and his ability to speak, which was the chief

altered should be free to maintain it, but until the meeting of the council they should introduce no further innovations in religion, and should not forbid the Mass, nor hinder Catholics from assisting thereat. Against this decree, and especially against the last article, the adherents of the new Evangel, the Elector Frederick of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Margrave Albert of Brandenburg, the Dukes of Luneburg, the Prince of Anhalt, together with the deputies of fourteen of the free and imperial cities, entered a solemn protest as unjust and impious. The meaning of the protest was that the dissentients did not intend to tolerate Catholicism within their borders. On that account

factor in his particular church, and doctrine had little to do with it. The singing also is a great factor in Protestant churches, and if a church had a good preacher or lecturer and a good choir, its congregation was assured. Preachers are usually "called" by men to fill pulpits, and it is not to be wondered at that God's voice in the matter is often mute.

With what supercilious pride I viewed the Catholic Church because she claimed to be *the only Christian Church approved by Christ!* How exceedingly small, ignorant, and narrow were the adherents of a faith who could believe in a Church which it was so apparent shortened God's arm! Were we not all "made to His image and likeness?" Did Christ not come to earth to save *all* mankind? How, then, could any church dare to say who should and who

they were called Protestants. In course of time the original connotation of "no toleration for Catholics" was lost sight of, and the term is now applied to, and accepted by, members of those Western Churches and sects which, in the sixteenth century, were set up by the Reformers in direct opposition to the Catholic Church. The same man may call himself Protestant or Reformed; the term "Protestant" lays more stress on antagonism to Rome, the term "Reformed" emphasizes adherence to any of the Reformers. Where religious indifference is prevalent, many will say they are Protestants, merely to signify that they are not Catholics.—*Catholic Encyclopedia*.

should not be saved? Could Catholics really be sincere in believing "Outside the Church there is no salvation"? And could they really believe that a priest—a mere man—could forgive sins? Surely they did believe, for they would go through fire and water to secure a priest to administer at the bedside of a dying man. But, of course, in my mind, it was all superstition, just as the belief in saints, scapulars, and the efficacy of holy water. And that was one of the principal duties of the priest, to keep his people in ignorance and superstition.

We cannot wonder that my friends gasped in horror when they heard that I had accepted the Catholic faith, and, worse yet, was going to become a priest. My experience in becoming a Catholic is that of the average convert—loss of friends, being misunderstood, and ostracism. Therefore, I feel that perhaps in a certain way I am peculiarly fitted to explain what the Catholic Church really does teach and practice.

Many expressions which are most familiar to a Catholic are, at times, quite foreign to a non-Catholic; therefore, I have tried as far as possible to eliminate anything which might be confusing. The polemic style—so much favored in Catholic works of instruction—I have also

avoided as far as possible, and have substituted stories in the form of a dialogue, which has proved very successful. The reader will see that I have not touched on all the questions of the catechism, but have simply tried to supply the incentive for seeking further information.

J. R. BUCK.

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A Convert-Pastor Explains

CHAPTER I

WHY A CHURCH?

“WE did not think we could get an ad on your curtain, Father,” said Charles Fairfield with a pleased expression as he folded up the copy he had been showing to me.

“The boys call you ‘Chuck,’ on the campus, do they not?” I asked quite irrelevantly.

“Yes, Father, they do. How did you know?”

“Oh, away back in ancient history I used to go to college, and some way I have never forgotten the ways of boys,” and I smiled as I handed him the envelope the copy had been in.

I was just finishing a new parish hall and was receiving ads for the curtain. There was a Methodist college in the town and the boys from one of the fraternity houses were running a “Vicarious Vision of Victuals for the Vicinity,” as their ad read, for the purpose of helping along with expenses. It was a candy shop and lunch counter, and I had just given permission for their ad to appear on the curtain.

Chuck was the advertising manager, and I

knew, by his diffident manner, his misgivings about approaching me, so I did all I could to place him at ease. Considerable trade was expected from my school, which was near the lunch counter, hence the boy's efforts to get an ad on the curtain. Evidently he felt much relieved at the outcome, so I ventured banteringly, "You don't happen to belong to the Ku Klux Klan do you?"

"No, Father; I am a Methodist, but I have never been anti-Catholic," he replied seriously.

"Well," I replied, "had it been some years ago, I fear I could not have said as much, for at one time I truly believed no good could come from the Catholic Church. I am a convert to the Church, you know, and my people were Presbyterians."

I could see that my remark had astonished the young man, but it had opened the gate for questions, as I thought perhaps it would.

"Since you were once a Protestant," he said, "you know perhaps what Protestants think of your religion. I fully recognize the good your Church does with its hospitals and charitable institutions, but, not meaning to offend you, Father, may I ask why it is that so many Catholics are so ignorant?"

I looked quizzically at him for a moment, and seeing he was in earnest, I replied:

"In some things, my dear boy, Catholics are

in the same class of ignorance as Protestants and others; but if you mean that the Catholic is ignorant of his religion, I wish to say that the average Catholic knows far more than the average Protestant."

I saw immediately that the young man was disconcerted, for he really believed that Protestants were far better versed in religion than Catholics are. It is not always easy to put a person right without embarrassing him, but I thought I would try anyway.

"You say you are a Methodist," I continued. "Now will you please tell me just what you must believe to be a Methodist? What is the difference between your church and the Presbyterian church?"

After a few moments' thought—I could see that he was sincere—he looked up and said "Really, I do not know. I have never thought of it in that way."

"That is an honest answer," I replied, "and it proves my assertion that Protestants often accuse Catholics of things of which they themselves are guilty."

"But what must the Catholic believe to be a Catholic?" asked the young man, with a smile.

"He must first of all accept," I replied, "what doubtlessly nearly every child in the catechism class would tell you—the Apostles Creed. It contains most things that are of faith."

“Will you say it?” asked the young man, and I repeated:

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.”

As the young man arose, took his hat, preparatory to leaving, he remarked:

“Well, Father, you have changed my opinion somewhat as to where ignorance really exists. But I fear I am not a good specimen of Protestantism.”

“Why, my dear boy,” I replied, “you are no specimen of Protestantism, in the strict sense of the word, at all, for you do not protest. And while you may not know some things about religion, nevertheless you are an intelligent young man, and I am very much pleased indeed to have met you.”

And while the expression was commonplace enough, I think we parted good friends.

The attitude of this young man is that of many non-Catholics, who, while good and sincere, believe Catholics are generally ignorant of their religion, and that ignorance is encouraged by the Church itself. They are, therefore, surprised to learn that many Catholics think the same of Protestants. The non-Catholic often knows many scriptural texts, and may be well versed in the Bible, too. But the very principle of Protestantism would prevent his knowing anything of doctrine, and anything dogmatic is obnoxious to him.

What, then, is the principle of Protestantism? Ask any well-informed Protestant this question, and he will answer that it is the Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible, and that *self-interpreted*. No one has a right to dictate what a scriptural text may or may not mean. Each one must draw his own conclusions, and, of course, this precludes anything objectively dogmatic; and if he is a consistent Protestant, he must despise anything of a dogmatic nature in religious matters. No Pope, no Church, is infallible. It is this principle that has set up church after church and sect after sect. It is this principle that teaches one that Christ is divine; i. e., true God and true man, and an-

other that Christ is not divine. And strange as it may seem, both will defend their contention from the same Bible. It was this multiplicity of religions and contentions which prevented me from really accepting belief in any particular church. I was young, arrogant, and prided myself on my ability to think for myself, and in so doing, knew I was living up to the principle of Protestantism.

What is the principle of Catholicism? It is the Bible, the whole Bible (and, by the way, Protestants do not have the whole Bible) and authenticated tradition; for the Bible was not in existence as it now appears until printing was invented, or about the time Columbus reached the shores of America, 1492, nearly one thousand five hundred years after Christ died. Early Christians had only the teaching of the church to guide them. Hence the Catholic has the Bible and tradition interpreted by the Church, which, of necessity, must be divinely guided as per Christ's promise.

We have something of this exemplified in the Supreme Court of the United States. If a law is in dispute, it may be settled in a lower court; but if this fails, then it may be taken to the Supreme Court, and the decision of that court is final. So in regard to the doctrines of the Catholic Church. If the Church through the Pope makes an official decision, it is final.

And what is more, it is infallible and must be right, because it was Christ who said, "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world," and Christ is God. If the enemies of the Church could find one vulnerable spot in this armor of infallibility, then the Catholic Church would be as vacillating as any human organization, and very like unto Protestant churches.

This word infallible puzzled me. I knew it meant "without possibility of error," but like so many others, I thought Catholics used it to mean "without sin," or, if applied to a person, one who could not sin. When Catholics said their Pope was infallible, I was sure they meant he could not sin. Of course, this is wrong. The Pope is a human being, with the same nature as other men, and can sin the same as other men if he wants to. But Catholics speaking of his infallibility, I learned, meant that he could not err in pronouncing or defining a doctrine of faith or morals to be accepted by the whole Church. They mean that his decisions on such rare occasions are divinely protected from error for the benefit of the people.

Thus when the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was declared in 1854, and Pope Pius IX, as head of the Church, declared this to be a doctrine which all Catholics must accept and believe, it did

not mean something new, for it was believed by practically all Catholics in all ages of Christianity. But discussion arose concerning the Immaculate Conception, and Pope Pius IX defined it. All Catholics believe in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; i. e., that her body, the holy tabernacle of a soul which never had been under the stain of any sin whatever, was taken into heaven, but as yet this belief has not been made compulsory. If any doubt should arise in regard to this, the Pope would undoubtedly define it, and it would be a doctrine which all Catholics would have to accept.

When I had gone thus far into the question of the Church, I commenced to see where it might possibly be right. But I had serious doubts as to whether the Church could prove her assertion that she was infallible. I was a sort of agnostic—must prove everything myself—so I naturally wanted proof of this. However, with all my prejudice, I realized that an infallible Church was the only kind in which I could put implicit trust, so I set about finding out the proofs for infallibility.

The fact of the matter was, I had just about abandoned hope of finding any church which would or could convince me. I was like so many of this day who say “It makes no difference to what church you belong, or whether you have any church at all. Just do the best

you can, and you will be saved. God is all-merciful, and surely He would not condemn a man who did the best he could." Nor would He. But who is to determine just what "the best he can is? Or how far is a man to go in searching it out? It is a beautiful sentiment, and to those who do not think, it seems to answer. But it is decidedly illogical.

No one, no matter what he may think of Christ, would place himself on a plane of intelligence higher than that of Christ. One may think Him divine or just a man, but one must admit that He was the wisest of men at least. If you or I had some work to accomplish, it makes no difference how insignificant it might be, we must first of all have some plan by which it may be accomplished.

Supposing I wish to erect a building. First of all I must have some definite plan as to its size and use, the ground upon which it is to be erected, and the material of which it is to be built. Now suppose I hire a foreman, and tell him to get his men and go to work. He comes in a few days, and says "Well, Father, where are the plans for the building you wish me to put up?"

"Oh," I reply, "I have no plans."

He looks at me in astonishment, and says "That's queer. But where is the place where it is to be erected?"

"I am not particular," I reply, "just use your own judgment."

He surmises it is to be on the church grounds, perhaps, and continues "Of what material is it to be made, and for what is it to be used?"

Again I tell him to use his own judgment, and that I will abide by his decision. His very looks would show he was questioning my sanity, and he would probably say "Well, my time is too precious to work for a fool." And he would be right, too.

Well, that is exactly the position of one who would say that Christ was indifferent as to whether man belonged to a church or not, and the very fact of his taking that position shows he would place himself on a higher plane of intelligence than Christ. For, while mere man has a plan for everything he does, he would say that Christ, Who came to earth for the greatest work man can imagine—to save all from sin and to bring all to their final destiny—was without a plan.

But Christ did have a plan, a very specific plan. He knew He would not remain upon earth, in the same form as other men, more than a short time. He lived but thirty-three years before His crucifixion, yet He came to save *all* mankind at *all* times from sin, and His three years of active work were spent chiefly

in formulating and making known His plan. And it is very clear that His plan was to found a *Church*, not churches, and to place within that Church all those things which would be necessary for man's salvation at all times.

In St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians we see plainly that the Jewish synagogue was a type of this Church which Christ was to found. "All things happened to them (the Jews) in figure." St. Paul says that in the Jewish Church there were priests and Levites who were ordained for ministering at the altar. And should matters become entangled or dispute arise, it was the high priest—a figure of the Pope—who was called upon to settle the question. "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within the gates; then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come unto the priests and Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. . . . and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. . . . Thou shalt not decline from the sentence that they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not

hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die; and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel." (Deut. xvii, 8-13.)

Now a similar order was to obtain in the Church. But the Church was the reality of the figure seen in the Jewish dispensation, for, "All these things happened to them (the Jews) in figure." Therefore in the Church which Christ was to found there was to be a head. To be sure, Christ is the head of the Catholic Church, just as God was head of the Jewish Church, but this head is invisible, and Christ clearly showed that a visible head was necessary for His plan of a Church. God is the invisible head of all governments, yet there is always a visible head also. The President is the visible head of the United States Government; the King of England is the visible head of the English nation; and even in all savage tribes which have been found, there was always a visible head—a chief, or whatever he might be called.

Therefore, when Christ came to earth and commenced His public life, He made known who was to be the visible head of the Church He was to found. In the first chapter, forty-second verse of St. John, we read how our Lord renamed Simon, the son of Jona, and called him Peter, which means a rock. Andrew, the

brother of Simon, was the first Apostle called by Jesus, and Andrew went to his brother and said "We have found the Messias, which is being interpreted, the Christ." (John i, 41.) Then in the following verse we read "And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus looking upon him, said: 'Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted, Peter.'" Now the name Peter, in the Syro-Chaldaic, the language in which Christ spoke, means a rock.

At that time Jesus did not tell them why He had renamed Simon, but after He had chosen all the Apostles, He spoke to them one day, and asked, "Whom do men say I the Son of Man am?" And in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew we read the answers and an explanation for the change of Simon's name. "And they (the Apostles) said: 'Some say Thou art John the Baptist; and others, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets.'" Then Jesus turned toward Simon-Peter and asked "But whom do ye say that I am?" And Peter replied in his impetuous way "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answering him, said: "Blessed art thou, Simon, Bar-Jona (i. e. Simon the son of Jona) because flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who art in heaven. And I say also unto thee: that thou art Peter (the Rock) and upon this Rock

will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Apostles knew then, and the world was to know later, that Christ's plan was to found *a church*. In the following lines of the same chapter of St. Matthew we find Jesus giving to Peter, the first Pope, the power of authority. Just as the President of the United States is given certain powers of authority, so did Christ give to St. Peter the power of binding and loosing. Washington was the first President of the United States, and his office and powers fell to the next President. So, too, did this power of the Popes descend upon the next in line, and there is as complete a line of Popes from Peter to Pius XI (now in the chair), 261 in all, as the line of presidents from Washington to Coolidge.

Some time ago I received a question in the question box of the church, asking how and when the various Protestant churches were started. I replied that Protestantism started with Martin Luther in 1517, and then went on to speak of other denominations.

The next day a good lady called and accused me of lack of knowledge. "Why," she said, "we will admit that the Catholic Church was the one which was founded by Christ, and that Protestantism started with Luther. All fair historians will say this. But you apparently fail to know that the Catholic Church fell away

from Christ's teachings, and became so corrupt that it was absolutely necessary to found a new Church."

I was somewhat amused, but seeing the good woman was perfectly sincere, I asked her if she had erected a beautiful and expensive house, and after living in it for a few years found it leaked when the rainy season came, if she would utterly destroy the house.

"Certainly not," she replied.

"Well," I continued, "do you not think it rather strange that if the Church which Christ founded had fallen into error, that Christ would utterly destroy it and establish dozens of others, all more or less defective?"

Fortunately, she had come armed with her Bible, so I asked her if she would mind my referring to it. I could easily see that she was a very good woman, and anxious to have me accept religion in her light. She readily proffered me the book, and I turned to the last chapter of St. Matthew, (xxviii) and in the last two verses (19-20) I asked her to read.

She took the Bible and read aloud: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Even then she did not quite see the point, so I asked:

“Would it be possible for our Saviour to come to earth, found a Church, to live the life He lived and die the death He died to convince a large portion of the world that He was divine; i. e., true God and true man, and still be a falsifier, a liar?”

“Why, certainly not,” she replied.

“Well, doesn’t it seem strange that our good Saviour would found a Church, promise to remain with it *to the End of Time*, and then after some fifteen hundred years allow it to fall into error? Would He not be telling a falsehood, if such a thing were possible?”

In a way I was sorry for the good woman, for I could see plainly that I had struck at the very foundation of her faith. But her remark as she arose to leave surprised and even amused me, it was so typical of my old self.

“I don’t know what to think,” she said, “but I have often been told that all priests were sharp and cunning, and can make black look white. However, I am going to think this over and see what explanation I can get, for I cannot think Jesus made that remark for the Catholic Church alone.”

CHAPTER II

ARE GOD AND HEAVEN KNOWABLE?

LATE one afternoon in the early spring I was riding through the beautiful Willamette valley in Oregon. The air was balmy, and filled with the breath of violets; the almond trees were bursting into bloom, and on every side was the trace of that magical touch which produces the "feeling of sadness and longing, that is not akin to pain," as Longfellow so fittingly describes it. The train slowed up to cross the river as the sun was setting, and the colors in the sky, reflected in the water, were indescribable. As I sat drinking in the grandeur of the scene, some one said "I suppose you are seeing a God in all that, Father," and turning around, I saw a young lawyer with whom I was acquainted.

"Yes," I said, "I am seeing not *a God*, but *the God*," and I made room for him beside me.

"You priests are great sticklers for exactness," he said as he settled himself in a comfortable position. "Who else would think of the difference between *a* and *the*?"

"Lawyers," I replied laconically.

"That may be," he continued, "but with all your supposed exactness and precision, I could never think of God but as a strange unknown and unknowable being. Would you mind telling me just what your conception of God is? We are told He made the world, is the Creator of heaven and earth and all things. But that only adds to my confusion."

In a way his question was a poser. Just how would a simple priest explain to a lawyer what God is?

"Well," I thought to myself, "I'll try answering as I would a child."

After a moment I said, "First, tell me just what your conception of God is? You believe there is a God, do you not?"

"I do not know," he answered. "I can scarcely say I do not believe, for there must be some creative power or something to start with."

"Good," I replied, "I take it then, that you do not believe in more than one God."

"Well," he said, as he gazed over a strip of green country, "I do not believe in plural Gods, but it is difficult for me to grasp the idea of God as I presume you do. I have my five senses and have never apprehended Him with these, and I take it this is the only way one can gain an idea of God or heaven or any of those things

of which Christians so often speak. I wish I could."

"Do you believe in the supernatural, that is, things above the natural?" I asked.

"No," he said, after a moment's pause, "I cannot say I do. When I think of a Creative Being, or whatever one may call it, I think I have exhausted my powers for belief in the supernatural."

I saw that though my good friend was a lawyer, he was not much of a philosopher, and concluded that a child's explanation would be the better way to explain matters.

"Look out of the window," I continued, "and witness the beauties of the landscape. Are they not marvelous?"

"They are indeed," he replied.

"Now suppose a blind man were to come to you, and ask you to tell him what kind of country we are passing through. You would doubtless begin enumerating the various scenes. You would tell him of the mountains we see so far away, almost blue-black, of their brightening and growing greener as they come nearer. You would describe the blossoms of the trees, the little blue violets in the grass, the yellow and red tulips. You would then speak of the sky, a different shade of blue from the violets, the fleecy clouds tinged with gold, and how far away they seemed to one looking from the earth.

"All this you would tell the blind man, but what would your words mean to him if he had never seen the light of day? How could he even imagine the color of blue-black? Just what words would you use, or in what manner would you convey to the poor man's mind the color of blue and its varying shades? What impression would your choicest words make upon him if you tried to describe the yellow and red of the tulips? And if he were inclined to disbelieve you, and should say 'I do not believe there is any such thing as color; red and yellow and green and blue are just figments of the mind. I cannot grasp the meaning of color from what you say, nor can you convey it to my mind through any of my senses; therefore, I do not believe there is any such thing as sight at all.' Could you convince him?"

Slowly the young man turned his gaze from the landscape through which we were passing, and said "Your illustration is good, Father, and I commence to understand what you mean by *supernatural*. You have surely given me food for thought."

I suppose I showed pleasure at his words, for he asked, after a pause, "But do all the perfections you give to God, your God, perhaps I should say, such as all-just, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-perfect, coincide with what we see

about us every day, and with our own experiences? Just look three seats ahead of us and on the opposite side of the car, and explain those attributes."

I looked as directed, and my gaze rested upon a really pitiful creature. A man who had grown old before his time, feeble, ill, and crippled, with one empty sleeve, and his white hair announcing his premature decay as clearly as the drooping plant announces a cut worm at work at its roots.

"That man," said the lawyer, "has a truly pitiful history, for I happen to know the case. He was strong and healthy a few years ago, with a wife and two children. Then he lost his position, and after trying many times to reestablish himself at his usual work, was obliged to accept a position in an unhealthy mine. Here he worked like a slave until he contracted the rheumatism which has crippled him so much. Then one day a loaded car of ore crushed his arm against the wall and it had to be amputated. His wife and both children died, and it was found that the poor fellow had contracted tuberculosis, and he is now on his way to the state sanitarium, where he will probably die. What can you say of the attributes of God in his case?"

"It is indeed a sad case," I replied, "and I can readily appreciate your thoughts of a God

who would allow such things. Can you tell me if he has any religion?"

"Yes," my friend replied, "and strange to say, he has turned from a ranting atheist, and, I understand, was baptized not long ago by Father X——. When he was well and strong, he laughed at a God or the idea of such a Being. But no sooner did he fail in health than he turned to religion, and accepted not only that God of your faith, but your faith itself. That is what puzzles me."

I smiled as I continued my questions.

"Have you known other cases than this where a person has turned to God only when affliction has overtaken him?"

The young man looked sharply at me, and then replied that he had known many such, and commenced to recount them.

I let him go on, and finally asked.

"Does this case before us, and all other cases of that sort not give you an inkling of the design of God?"

"I can't say that they do," he replied, with a puzzled air.

"Well, my dear man," I said, "your experiences among men and in the world have been quite extensive, I should imagine, and among all the cases and individuals you have met, who has the most character, the man who has gone through troubles and trials, the one who has

known sickness and the loss of dear ones, perhaps, and sorrows and misfortunes, or the man who has had all he wanted—riches, health, prosperity, etc?"

"Why, the one who has had trials, I should say," he replied, and then after a few moments' thought, "Yes, it is always the man who has had reverses and misfortunes who has real character."

"And now I am going to ask you a very trite question," I continued. "Why were you made, anyway? You have heard this question asked many, many times, I am sure. But have you ever answered it in your own case?"

"To be honest, I do not know," he replied. "I have thought of it often, but have never had a satisfactory answer in my own case. What do you think? Why were you made?"

"I shall give you the answer the little child learns in his catechism," I said. "When he is asked 'Why were you made?' he finds the answer given is, 'To know, love, and serve God in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.' And the older I get, the more meaning the answer has. As I said, it is impossible for me to tell you what God is, since you doubt your belief in Him, and depend upon your senses only. Neither can I tell you what heaven is. But you have that within you which proclaims a life beyond this one."

“What is it?” he asked.

“Well,” I said, “you and I and every person in the world have a desire for one thing—perfect happiness. It is true that each one of us may think of it in a different way, yet the desire for perfect happiness is the same in each one. Even the man who commits crime does so in striving for happiness. Every other desire or appetite we have has something in this world to satisfy it. But not one of us knows perfect happiness, though each desires it above all else. If we are hungry, there is food; if thirsty, drink; if weary, rest. But nothing brings us perfect happiness. There is always something else to be desired.

“When I was a child,” I continued, “I remember I wanted a certain iron top which another boy possessed. He would wind a string about the peg, and throw it out on the floor, and it would spin and hum, and it seemed almost a human thing to me. I used to think if I could only have a top like that one I would never want anything more in this world. It seemed to my childish mind the acme of happiness. What do you suppose that top would mean to me today? As I grew older, other things attracted my attention, and I longed in turn for this, that, and the other thing. Many of them I obtained. But no sooner did I possess the object I desired than it seemed to turn

to ashes in my grasp, and I found nothing gave me perfect happiness.

“Now, if I were to ask you to name that thing or those things which would make you perfectly happy and leave nothing else whatever to be desired, and if I might with assurance promise I would grant your request, what would you name? You would have to remember that your choice was final, and there would be no further gifts. If you would stop to think, you would find you could not form even a conception of what you would ask. Your past experience has taught you to discredit your desires, and you would not be able to say what you really want, and yet the desire for perfect happiness is paramount with each one of us.”

The young man was again gazing out across the country, but this time he was unseeing. At length he asked, “Well, will we ever attain this happiness? And what will it be?”

“We will attain this happiness,” I said, “and this is a proof of the hereafter, implanted within each one of us. We will be perfectly happy when we are united with God, for whom we are made. And everything in this world is but a stepping-stone toward that end. Heaven will be perfect happiness. It will leave no desire in the heart.

“You have said that the man who suffers

has the most character, and it is through trials and sufferings that God brings us to realize as the beautiful prayer says, 'The nothingness of this world, the greatness of heaven, the shortness of time, and the length of eternity.' That poor man a few seats ahead of us, no doubt, came to a full realization of these facts, and the utter impotence of the world to satisfy him. God used the means which seem so cruel to you to bring that man to Himself. And I doubt not if we were to ask him if he would wish to change places and go back to the time he scouted God, he would tell us he preferred his miseries and his knowledge of God to the old life in which God had no part."

We were nearing the station at which I was to leave the train, so I commenced to gather up my belongings. The young lawyer arose and extending his hand, said, "I can't tell you, Father, how much I have enjoyed the talk we have had. I shall think often of what you have said, and when I am in this town I will surely come to see you if I may."

As best I could, I also expressed my pleasure at the meeting and conversation, and telling him I hoped to see him soon, I dropped his hand and stepped out into the early evening, which was speaking in no uncertain terms of the wonders of God.

CHAPTER III

THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY

“**C**AELI enarrant gloriam Dei et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum.”

I was reading my breviary, and paused to put into English the beautiful words to be found in the opening chapter of the nineteenth Psalm of the King James version of the Bible. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork,” when the bell rang and a bright, intelligent-looking young woman was shown into my study. It was Anna M., who was engaged to marry a young man of my parish, and whom I was instructing. In the beginning she had demurred at taking instructions, but having once started, she was quite enthusiastic, and always brought a number of questions for me to answer. She was the kind of pupil who gives every priest encouragement and pleasure, for she showed she was anything but indifferent in her inquiries.

After a few commonplace words, she opened her book—a rather advanced catechism—and remarked:

“I have been reading about the Trinity, Father, and it seems something beyond my reason. ‘Three Divine Persons, really distinct, and equal in all things—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’ I fear you will think me a difficult pupil.”

“It *is* above our reason,” I replied, “but it is not *contrary* to reason. There are many things which we cannot reason out ourselves, but which are nevertheless true. Cooperating with the help God gives to each one of us, our faith increases, and the eyes of faith will help us to understand.”

“You may be right, Father,” she responded “but I must understand a thing before I can believe it. You know that is one of the things brought against the Catholic Church—one must accept whatever she teaches, blindly, implicitly, whether reasonable or unreasonable. I know you will pardon me, Father, for speaking so plainly, but it seems best to be open in these instructions.”

“Quite right,” I responded heartily, “I have said I wanted you to ask anything you find difficult, and I will try to make things clear. But you are mistaken if you think the Church either could or would oblige anyone to accept

what is not true. Because an individual does not know or understand a truth, it cannot alter the fact that it is a truth. Because a child did not understand, or found it difficult to understand that two and two are four, would not change the truth of it, would it?"

"N-o," she hesitated, "but it would not be fair to ask the child to believe until he could grasp the fact. I do not think I could ever believe a thing I did not know for certain, and could not blame the child."

Glancing out of the window I saw the bright new motor car belonging to Anna. I knew it had been given to her by her father recently, and that she was just learning to drive it. So I asked, somewhat irrelevantly, it would seem, "How did you come here today?"

Her attractive face dimpled. "You want to flatter me, Father, for I saw you looking at my new car. Isn't it a beauty?"

"It truly is," I replied with enthusiasm. "What is it?"

"Why, it's an M—— six," she said proudly.

"A six what?" I asked.

"Why, a-a-six. Just a six," she replied, a little confused, evidently feeling her ignorance concerning such things.

I smiled, but made no remark, and she, feeling it was necessary to explain as far as she could, said:

"I think it refers to the car. A six is larger than a three, four, or five, you know. But there are lots of things I do not know about cars yet, Father."

"Evidently," I laughed, "but do you really believe it is a six, though you do not know what a six is? You know you just said you could not believe a thing you did not know for certain. Now if the dealer in cars were to come to you and tell you it was a six-wheeled car, you would not believe it, because you are accustomed to knowing what a car looks like, and that it has but four wheels. But should he say your car was a six something else, you believe at once. Why? Because you have faith in him and the position he holds. Am I not right?"

"Go on and tell me about the Trinity, Father," she said, as she gave me a whimsical look. "I see the point."

"But," I insisted, "are we not foolish mortals to take so readily the word of a man because of our faith in him, and refuse to accept upon faith the things God has revealed to us? How readily we take for granted what scientists tell us. Scarcely a soul would doubt what these men tell us about the distance of the sun from us, the phases of the moon and stars, and the eclipses; things which seem far above reason to many minds, but surely are not contrary to

reason. Now you would never suspect that everything in this room, every article, reflects in a way the Most Blessed Trinity, would you?"

"No, Father, I surely would not. Does it?"

"Yes, it does. Take the book you are holding, for instance. It has three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness. In fact, as St. Augustine indicates so beautifully, there is nothing in creation but resembles in a certain degree the Most Blessed Trinity. What is a line?"

"The shortest distance between two points," she replied readily.

I did not speak again for a time, because I saw she was trying to determine how that represented the Trinity. Finally I asked again "Is a line visible?"

"No, Father, a line, strictly speaking, is but imaginary. A line surely cannot reflect the Three in One of which you speak."

"A line has no breadth or thickness, but it has a beginning, connection, and end. Are not these absolutely necessary to a line, and are they not three distinct attributes?"

She made no direct reply, and we were both silent for a time. I was anxious for the truth of these things to become firmly rooted, for so often the student of religion fails to realize his limited capacity for reasoning and thinking for himself.

Presently the young woman asked in a tone

in which I could detect great seriousness, "Does the Bible mention the Blessed Trinity?"

I was very glad she asked this question, since it is one which is sometimes brought by strictly Bible Christians, so I answered:

"No, the Bible does not mention the Blessed Trinity in those words, but nevertheless the Bible makes it clear that it is one of the important revelations. In the opening chapter of Genesis we find the words 'Let *Us* make man to *Our* own image and likeness,' indicating the plurality of Divine Persons. But *image* and *likeness* are singular, which indicates the unity of *essence*, as theologians call it. In the same book (Gen. iii. 22), we read again, 'God said, behold the man is become as one of *Us*.' At the end of the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew (I am using the King James version, since perhaps you are more familiar with it) we find our Lord using these words: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' In numerous places we find references to the Most Blessed Trinity in the Bible, and one could scarcely call himself a Christian if he rejected this belief."

"It is very wonderful," said my young friend, "and I wish to ask another question, though I fear you will think me very ignorant indeed. But I have never had an opportunity of really

knowing anything about religion. We are taught, as the Bible indicates, that we are made in the image and likeness of God. Where is this image and likeness? In the body or in the soul?"

Her attitude was growing more and more serious, and it was very evident that she was taking the instructions to heart. It was a real pleasure to answer her, so I said:

"This image and likeness is chiefly in the soul, because it is a spirit that will never die, and has understanding and free will."

Then, turning to my bookcase, I selected Rt. Rev. Msgr. Vaughn's "Thoughts for All Times," and read:

"The soul not merely exists, nor does it merely know it exists; for this very knowledge in its turn gives rise to love. Take a concrete example: A man contemplates himself; as a consequence of this contemplation he knows himself, and his knowledge breeds within him a love for himself.

"What contemplates? The *soul*.

"What is that which knows? The *soul*.

"What is that which loves? The *soul*.

"Although existence is not the same thing as knowledge, and though knowledge is not the same thing as love, yet it is the very self-same, invisible soul that (1) exists, that (2) knows, and that (3) loves. Here then we have a dis-

tinction of relation, and yet a unity of nature within the soul of every man, whereby we may trace, however dimly, the image of the Trinity in ourselves."

"The examples are excellent," remarked Anna with enthusiasm, "and I am going to continue exposing my ignorance by asking another question. Does your Church not teach that everything existing in creation is the work of the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and that every effect in the world is due to the united efforts, as it were, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?"

"You are exactly right in this supposition," I replied, "but such clear-cut expressions in your questions stamp you as anything but ignorant."

She smiled pleasantly at my praise, for anyone likes sincere appreciation, and I continued:

"The similarity is also traceable to the Trinity in every act we perform. To make it clear I will cite an instance.

"Some years ago, I was in the studio of an artist who was about to carve a statue of our Blessed Mother from a great block of marble. To me it was a great mystery, and my interest was all the keener, since I hoped to obtain the statue some day for my church. With the tools laid neatly on a table, the block of marble placed on a convenient stand of correct elevation, the

artist was standing back viewing the block from all angles. Suddenly he picked up a chisel and mallet and with one vigorous stroke chipped off a considerable portion of the marble. Then, with other chisels he took out a piece here and there, showing by firmness of action how well he understood his work.

“At length I ventured to ask him what would be necessary for me, a perfect ignoramus, if there is such a thing, to do such a work. Of course, he knew at a glance how very green I was, and with a peculiar little twinkle in his eyes, he said ‘Three things, and three only are necessary. And I do not think you possess them.’

“But what are they?” I insisted. “Perhaps you do not read me aright.”

“And he replied, as he took up a bit of crayon to mark a certain point on the block, ‘Knowledge, will, and power. You may have the power, but if I read character aright, you have neither the knowledge nor the will.’

“And when we stop to consider the matter, we must realize that these three things are absolutely necessary if we would perform any work whatsoever. If any one of them is wanting, then nothing whatever will be accomplished. Everyone knows that knowledge, will, and power, are quite distinct, and yet these three must work together if any work whatever is done. And

in this a dim resemblance is again seen to the Trinity. We might say that every act of God is by the power of the Father, through the wisdom of the Son, and in virtue of the will of the Holy Ghost."

I saw my young pupil had had enough to think of for some time, so I indicated that the lesson was over for the day.

"Good-by, Father," she said, extending her hand. "I do not know when I have enjoyed anything as I have this instruction."

And then, with deep seriousness, she added, "Will you pray for me, Father, that I may be a good Catholic when I marry John?"

Thus the wall of objections to the faith was being swept away. I smiled as I took the firm hand, and replied, "I will be happy to pray for you and remember you in my Masses. And I am sure John is a most fortunate young man. May God bless you."

CHAPTER IV

SIN. ITS KINDS AND GRADES

HE was sitting in my study when I came in from giving Benediction—a little old man, rather poorly dressed, with a kindly eye, and a somewhat embarrassed manner. I shook hands, sat down, and commenced with common-places concerning the weather, until my visitor would be more at ease. Usually I answer questions and give instructions before Benediction, and this particular evening I had spoken on sin.

My visitor introduced himself—I shall call him Mr. Thomas—and finally said “I was in your church tonight, Father—should I call you ‘Father’? I am not a Catholic.”

I assured him that it was customary for everyone to address a priest as Father, and that we considered it a compliment, since we were the spiritual fathers of our people, and of everyone, for that matter, so he continued:

“I like the way you explain things, but wish you had told us more about sin, for some way

the various doctrines concerning sin have been a stumblingblock to me. You said there were different kinds of sin, and different grades of sin. May I ask you to explain this?"

"Most assuredly you may," I replied, and I was pleased to see he was losing his embarrassment. "I am always glad to tell anyone about my faith."

"You spoke of *original* sin and *actual* sin. Just what is *original* sin? Is it a sin against the seventh commandment? I think in your Bible it is the sixth. Does it refer only to the sins of impurity?" he asked.

"No," I said, "original sin is the sin which we all inherit from our first parents."

He did not speak, so I continued:

"Man was created to the image and likeness of God, and especially in the gift of reason and free will, and was intended for a constant state of happiness in this life, and everlasting glory in the next, if he remained faithful and obedient to God. But our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not remain faithful, but used the very gifts, with which they were endowed, to disobey God."

"In what way did they disobey? Do you refer to their eating the apple?" asked Mr. Thomas.

"Yes, by eating the fruit they were disobedient, and thereby lost their innocence and holiness, and were doomed to sickness and death.

Since in that one act human nature was on trial, we all share in their sin and punishment, as we should have shared in their happiness, if they had remained faithful. This is called *original sin*."

I find it is not well to go too rapidly in instruction, so I paused in order that he might ask questions if he wished. But since none was forthcoming, I continued:

"As one of the consequences of original sin, our nature was impaired, which darkened our understanding, weakened our will, and left in us a strong inclination to evil. We inherited it from our first parents, just as oftentimes physical defects or beauties are inherited from our parents. We are brought into this world with its guilt on our souls."

"But isn't that a seeming contradiction to the justice of God? Why should children who had no part in the sin of disobedience to God, be punished for the sins of their parents?"

"I am going to tell you a story by way of illustration," I replied.

"There was once a man who was quite poor when he married, and after a few years he found himself destitute, with a wife and several children to support. A rich neighbor undertook to relieve his distress, and gave a rich piece of land to him. It was fertile and productive if properly worked, and would easily have sup-

ported the young man had he farmed it diligently and well. The young man and his family moved to the farm with every hope of a future.

“However, the young man was indolent and careless, and before long his farm was overrun with weeds, and began to ‘run down,’ as farmers say. It did not support his family because of the father’s negligence, and his family came to dire want. Could that young man say it was the fault of the rich man who had been so willing to help him at first?”

“Why no, surely not,” replied Mr. Thomas. “That was the young man’s fault.”

“Exactly,” I said. “But was it the fault of the wife and family?”

“No,” said my friend, slowly, “it was not.”

“Yet the wife and family suffered for the fault of the father. Now, could the wife and family say with truth that it was the fault of the rich man?”

“No, Father,” answered Mr. Thomas.

Continuing my questions, I asked, “You consider your life a great gift, do you not?”

“Why yes, I certainly do,” he replied.

“Well, can you in any way see where God owed life to you? Do you think you or I are in any way necessary to God’s happiness?”

“No, I do not.”

“Then life to mankind is a wonderful gift which God freely gave to each one of us. It

may be compared to the fertile ground given to the indigent young man. God also gives us the reason to know what we are to do, and the will to do it. But He will not force us. Neither did He force Adam and Eve to abstain from the eating of the forbidden fruit."

The old gentleman sat twirling his hat.

Then, "Why do you suppose God did not do away with Adam and Eve at once? It seems to me I should have."

"No, God did not annihilate them, though as you have said, they may have deserved it, but out of His great love and mercy He promised to give them another chance. He punished them severely, and their children with them, by withholding His many blessings. He made it very difficult for them indeed, but said if they and their children would use the wonderful gifts He had given to them that He would yet save them. But they *must* be obedient. He promised a Redeemer in time, and commanded them to show their obedience by following the Redeemer's instructions.

"The Redeemer instituted a means whereby the soul of everyone can be cleansed from the taint of original sin and have a supernatural life, like Adam had originally, conferred on the soul.

"Therefore, Christians first of all see that their children are baptized. This washes away

the guilt in which they were born, as it were, makes them adopted children of God once more. Personally, I think God has been most merciful. If you have children, you have a right to expect obedience from them in all that is right and just, and in like manner we surely recognize God's right to exact obedience from us. We cannot dictate to Him the way we wish or desire, but must accept His way."

"Was anyone ever born free from this original sin, since our first parents?" asked Mr. Thomas.

"Yes," I replied, "the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, as we call her, was never for a moment under the stain of either original or actual sin."

"Will you please tell me why?" asked my friend.

"By the merits of her Divine Son," I answered, "she was exempt, and even when she was conceived by her saintly mother (Ann) she was not under the cloud. This is what we call the *Immaculate Conception*. It was because she was to be the mother of our Lord."

"Why," he exclaimed, "I always thought the *Immaculate Conception*, as you term it, meant that Christ was never under the shadow of sin, not His mother."

Presently he asked: "What about the other sin—*actual* sin, as you call it?"

“*Actual sin*,” I said, “is the sin which we actually commit ourselves. If I steal, or if I lie, or if I break any of the commandments of God or the commandments of the Church, it is *actual sin*.”

“Is one sin just as great as another?” he asked. “That is, are they all equal? When I was a boy, we used to have a little rime which ran

‘It is a sin to steal a pin
As much as any greater thing?’

“Even so, do you consider this rime true? Of course, to be a theft, the pin or article must be taken against the will of the owner.”

“No, I do not. And our common sense must tell us it is absurd. It would be putting heinous crime in the same class as that of stealing a pin.”

“I am glad to hear you say that, for it always seemed absurd to me,” he remarked. “Of course, an *actual sin* would be one where reason and free will took part?”

“Yes, the definition given in our little catechism makes that clear. It says, ‘An *actual sin* is any *willful* thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the law of God,’ and there are two kinds—mortal and venial. A mortal sin is a grievous or great offense against the law of God, and in order that it be mortal, three things are necessary. First, a grievous matter;

second, full knowledge or sufficient reflection (which, of course, refers to reason); and third, full consent of the will.

"Now, everyone will admit that the taking of human life is on the face of it a mortal sin, for we are commanded 'Thou shalt not kill.' Killing a fellow man is a grievous matter, and if it is done willfully and with full knowledge it is a mortal sin."

"But isn't murder always a mortal sin?" asked Mr. Thomas.

"Strictly speaking, murder is always a mortal sin, for Webster defines murder as an act of 'killing a human being *with malice aforethought*.' But killing a person without malice aforethought would change it, perhaps, to a venial sin. Let us suppose a case: A man is driving an automobile. He drives in a careful manner, but in an accident he kills a man. Immediately we see no premeditation, willfulness, nor carelessness, was there, and of course, there is doubt of any sin whatever. If the driver was slightly careless it would be a venial sin as far as his carelessness went. For a Catholic to miss Mass on Sunday or a holy day of obligation knowingly and willfully (unless he is ill or has a valid reason) is a mortal sin, the breaking of a commandment of the Church."

I did not go into detail concerning the laws of the Church, not deeming it expedient.

"What did you call the other kind of sin?" asked the old gentleman.

"The other kind of actual sin is called venial sin," I explained. "It is a slight offense against the laws of God in matters of less importance, or in matters of great importance without sufficient reflection or full consent of the will."

"Then stealing a pin would be a venial sin, would it not?"

"Yes, if the pin was just a common, ordinary one. It would be a matter of little importance."

"But would you not consider it stealing?" he asked.

"Certainly it is stealing, but would not be the same as if one took something really valuable. A common pin is of scarcely any value to anyone."

"But supposing it was of value to the owner, and the one stealing it did not know it?" persisted my visitor.

"Then it would be a venial sin, indeed, for full knowledge was wanting. You know a venial sin might be a matter of weight, but without full consent of the will or sufficient reflection or knowledge."

Mr. Thomas studied over this for a few moments—he had entirely lost his embarrassed manner—and then asked, "Do the circumstances of the person make any difference, of the owner, I mean?"

I did not know exactly what he meant by the question, so had to ask him to explain. So he gave an example:

"If I steal from Mr. A, who is rich, is it as much of a sin as if I steal from Mr. B, who is poor?"

This was an unexpected question, for, to a certain extent, there is a difference, but I was at a loss to know just how to explain, for many people think if a sin is not mortal, it is hardly worthy of a thought.

"A sin," I said, "whether mortal or venial, is an offense against the law of God, and every effort should be made by each individual to overcome even small venial sins. For, like a snowball, they increase in size almost unconsciously, and no telling when the ball will be large enough to start down hill, taking everything in its wake. It is the elimination of each little particle of snow which keeps the ball harmless, and it is the elimination of each little sin which keeps one from committing greater, or mortal sin."

"Now, let us suppose a boy is passing through an orchard on a short cut home from school. First of all, he knows he should not trespass in this orchard. As he goes along he sees a fine ripe apple within easy reach, and he takes it. This he knows is stealing. But he tells

himself it will never be known, felt, or missed, by the owner of the orchard, who is wealthy. It makes the offense lighter, but it is a sin, nevertheless.

“Suppose, again, there is a poor woman, very poor indeed, who is a widow, with several children to feed, clothe, and send to school. She works at washing, scrubbing, and any menial labor she can get, and finds it very difficult to make ends meet. Often the children do not have enough of the plainest food to eat, and their poor clothing often causes careless but nevertheless cutting remarks from their school companions.

“At the house where she has been working, the mistress gives her a fine roasted goose, jellies, and confections, as she is preparing to go home. The widow, knowing her children will have very little for their supper, places the food in her basket. On her way home there is a big crowd watching a fire; the widow has to pass through, and while she is pressing her way along, a boy who knows she is poor, and that the basket of provisions means much to her, deliberately steals the basket and makes away with it in the crowd. He does it with full knowledge and reflection.

“In the first instance the sin was venial, while in the second it was mortal. The objects

taken and the circumstances made the difference.” I paused, for my visitor was looking at his watch.

“You have made things very clear, Father, and if you will answer one more question, I will not trouble you further tonight.”

“Do not think it a trouble, my dear friend,” I replied, “for it is a real pleasure. What is your question?”

“I know you have often heard it said ‘If God knows all things, and is all-powerful, all-just, and all-merciful, and knows just what each individual will do, it is strange, is it not, that he allows one to commit sin, and keeps another from it?’ Then the person will often add, ‘Why, I would not do such a thing, and I am but a human being.’”

“Yes, I have often heard this remark, and by people who should know better,” I returned. “When God made man to His own image and likeness, He gave to man two prerogatives which place him far above all animals of the field. He gave to man reason and free will. Everyone prizes these gifts above all else. No one would part with his reason for all the world has to offer. How much would you take of riches, honors, and gifts, and change places with a poor imbecile? Neither would anyone part with his *free will*. These gifts are priceless.

“But of what avail would these gifts be, if we could not use them? Of what use would money be to a man stranded and alone on an island? What would all the wealth of the world mean to one situated as poor Robinson Crusoe was? The pleasure of a gift is in the use of that gift. So God would not have given much to man after all in reason and free will if man could not use the gifts. It is true, God knows how man will use the gifts, but He will not compel him in one way or the other. He requires that man use the gifts aright, if he would inherit the reward offered. Man knows that he will be rewarded if he uses the gifts aright, and will be punished if he does not use them aright.

“Let us suppose a case, to make it clear. Suppose a man comes to me, and asks the way to the statehouse. He *knows* that I am well acquainted in the town and will not send him amiss. I tell him the statehouse is two blocks east and two south. I know that if he disobeys my directions and goes west, he will come not to the statehouse but to the river. It is a dark night, and the man says ‘I wish to get to the statehouse, but I am not going to go east, I am going west.’ I know he is wrong, but I cannot compel him to take my directions. He goes west, falls into the river, and is lost.

Now, my *knowledge* of his danger will not make me responsible. The man *knows* I have directed him aright. Am I to blame for his folly? He used his will and reason in the wrong way, and no one could say I was guilty. To be sure, I might call a policeman and *compel* the man to go aright, but that would eliminate the use of his free will and reason.

“If we deliberately go against God’s gentle advice and choose wrong, then we surely cannot blame God for our folly. So we see that God is neither unjust nor unmerciful.”

The town clock was striking. It had been a pleasant evening for both of us; I was sure that the kindly old gentleman had enjoyed it. So, with real warmth, I invited him to come again, and he said good night.

CHAPTER V

GRACE AND ITS EFFECTS

I WAS perhaps eleven or twelve years old when I attended a revival meeting, which has always remained clear in my mind. I do not know under what “persuasion” or denomination the meeting was held, but I think it was Evangelical—according to the Protestant meaning of the word. The preacher “exhorted”—the proper procedure was to exhort, I believe—and gradually the congregation warmed up and began to go forward to the kneelers’ bench.

All who felt, or received, religion, went forward and the ranks of the “unregenerate” were growing less and less. At length a woman came to me and tried to urge me to go forward, but, much as I wished to comply with the request, and as much as I thought I needed religion, I could not feel the promptings of the Spirit, and so remained in my seat.

The congregation then began to pray that grace might be given to the few who would not profess, and at intervals I was asked if I had received grace. My position was very embar-

rassing, and I am certain that many went forward to avoid being made conspicuous.

In my maturer years I have looked upon such experiences as a sort of hypnotism on the part of the subject. But it roused in me a desire to know what grace really is. I asked many persons, but could never get a satisfactory answer. No one seemed to know exactly. When I took up the study of the Catholic catechism, I then learned the definition, and afterwards the importance of grace in religion. "Grace," the catechism says, "is a supernatural help of God, bestowed upon us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation."

Through man's disobedience to God in our first parents, we cannot claim as our right, anything from God. He is not obliged to give us anything, not even life. I would be very foolish if I thought I were necessary to God in any way for His happiness. He owes me nothing, and I owe Him everything.

When our first parents forfeited the gifts God was so willing to bestow upon man, if man remained faithful, He cast man out of the Garden of Eden, and said to Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Gen. iii, 17). God is infinite, and a mere finite But God did not even then utterly destroy nor desert man, for He promised a Redeemer Who

would atone for man's sins. This Redeemer was Christ, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and an infinite Being.

I may be able to show the disparity between God and man by an example which may also serve to enlighten one as to the seriousness of man's disobedience to God. A little boy, whom I knew as a child, was playing ball with another boy in the street. A neighbor's dog ran out suddenly and bit the little fellow severely. The father of the boy was very much incensed and demanded that the dog be killed, since he was dangerous. Another neighbor, a disinterested man, intervened and pleaded for the dog's life, saying it was a splendid shepherd dog, and if the angry parent would not demand its death, the dog's master would send it to the country. The man's anger was appeased, and the dog was banished. Possibly the dog may have missed his good home, and may have been miserable in a cold and barren country, perhaps often hungry.

The dog could never have gained this respite for himself, for he was but a brute. But when a man, an equal of the owner of the dog, and also of the parent of the boy, interceded, then the dog's life was spared. Now Christ is infinite, and through the merits He offered, God promised to reinstate man, if man remained faithful. Grace for our salvation is obtained

through the merits of Christ; it is a supernatural gift. We gain grace through these merits, and by cooperation with grace, obtain faith to work out our salvation.

A little boy who was very poor, once heard of a very rich man who had lost the diamond out of his ring. The stone was valuable, and on account of associations, the rich man prized it very highly. He looked vainly for it, and at length offered a very large reward to the finder. The little boy, after asking the man where he might possibly have lost the diamond, was convinced that it was where the man had been getting some geological specimens from a nearby cavern. The cavern was dark, and the task seemed hopeless.

But the little fellow went to his father and told him of the difficulties. The father undertook to assist the lad, and rigging up some batteries, he soon had a flashlight which could be carried about, and the rays directed into the crevices. The boy used this light, and after some time was rewarded by seeing a gleam of the diamond in some sand and rocks. It was an effort to reach the spot, but the boy continued his efforts until the valuable stone was recovered. He took it to the rich man, received the reward, and brought much happiness to himself as well as to his parents.

The light which the father furnished for his

son is something like the grace God gives to each of us. A light by which we may search out and know good from evil, seeing God's way in all things. The light alone would have been of no avail, if the boy did not cooperate by searching, and so grace would do us little good if we were not diligent in cooperating with it. God furnishes the light of grace, just as the father furnished the light for his little son. Christ Himself has said: "Without Me you can do nothing." We have the gifts of reason, will, understanding, memory, and imagination, but it is only when these gifts are illumined, as it were, by the grace of Christ, a supernatural grace, that we are enabled to work out our salvation.

There are two kinds of grace, actual and habitual. Actual grace is, if I may put it in a very simple way, that light which comes to us on the spur of the moment by which we distinguish right from wrong and choose right and reject wrong. In the words of the little catechism, "Actual grace is that help of God which enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and do good." The catechism also teaches us that "Habitual or sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God."

I once instructed a woman who had studied something of our religion, but was puzzled over

the definitions of grace. She was sincere, but it seemed that she would accept Scriptural proof easier than any other, so when we came to this subject, I asked her to turn to the fourth book of Kings and read what was there. (She always carried her own King James version of the Bible.) Opening her Bible, she commenced to search for the passage, but almost immediately exclaimed: "Why, there is no *fourth* book of Kings!"

Of course I had been referring to the Catholic version, called the Douay version, so I told her it would be in the second book of Kings in her Bible, for the first and second books of Samuel in her Bible were called the first and second books of Kings in our Bible. I explained that the Hebrews called them the Books of Samuel, while the Fathers of the Church called them the Books of Kings.

She looked as though she had caught me in something "sharp and cunning," but turning to the second book of Kings, she commenced reading the fifth verse. It is the account of Naaman being cured of leprosy. Naaman was a great general in the Syrian army, and the Lord had delivered Syria through him. In one of the raids, a little maid of Israel had been captured, and was given to the wife of Naaman for a handmaid. This little maid evidently grew very fond of her master and mistress, and upon

learning that Naaman was afflicted with leprosy, besought her mistress to go to the wonderful prophet, Elisha, of Israel, that he might be cured.

Naaman finally consented to go, and, with permission from the King of Syria, and letters and presents to the King of Israel, he set forth with his servants. The King of Israel, fearing it was a ruse to make war, was frightened, but gave his consent for Naaman to see the prophet. No doubt Naaman was often discouraged, and felt it a fruitless chase. But his servants prevailed on him, and he went with his retinue to the famous prophet.

Of course, Naaman expected the simple prophet to show great honor to the general of the Assyrian army, and was therefore much chagrined to find that no preparation whatever had been made for his reception. Elisha did not even come to meet, nor consent to see Naaman, but sent word by a messenger for Naaman to go to the river Jordan and bathe seven times.

“Why,” exclaimed Naaman, “what nonsense is this! Are not the Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel, that I may wash in them and be made clean?”

So he turned and was going away, when his servants came to him again and persuaded him; it was such a little thing to do, and so easily

accomplished, they said. They told him he had come such a long distance, and why not go and wash as the prophet advised?

So, after a time, Naaman went to the river Jordan, and bathed seven times, and lo, he was cleansed of his leprosy! The miracle so astonished and pleased Naaman that he declared that henceforth he would worship none but the living God of the Israelites. He was not only cleansed of his vile disease, but converted to the real God.

“Now,” I said to the lady, “in justification through sanctifying grace, we receive not only forgiveness of sins, but the virtues of faith, hope, and charity also, that is, the supernatural habit or fitness of eliciting the acts of these divine virtues. As by generation according to the flesh, we receive, not only life itself, but also our faculties, so, in supernatural generation we receive, besides the spiritual life itself, supernatural faculties also, for the more perfect exercise of the supernatural functions. Thus only can sanctifying grace, or the principle of supernatural life, act in a congenial manner, when it has certain permanent faculties. Before these virtues are infused into his soul, man can and must elicit certain supernatural acts, and such acts are elicited by the aid of actual grace.”

My visitor was listening closely, so I continued: “Using these promptings of Naaman

to be cured of his bodily ailment as a figure of actual grace, we might say actual grace came to him when he was persuaded to go to the prophet. It came again when he went to the King of Syria; again when he went to the King of Israel. At this juncture he was growing impatient, but this figure of actual grace came again and he went to the prophet. Then, as he would turn away and carry his leprosy with him, his servants interceded, and he finally went to the river Jordan.

“His cleansing was a permanent quality, and these many obediences brought, as it were, a figure of sanctifying or habitual grace. The habit of obeying was formed, and Naaman turned toward the true God and was ever faithful to Him. This,” I continued, “is a good figure of grace and its effects.”

“Yes,” she agreed. “I don’t know that I have ever before heard grace explained in that way. And now, I am anxious to know something about your Bible. But I must come some other time.”

I was not slow in appointing a time when we could go into the matter, and an appointment was made before she left.

CHAPTER VI

MARKS OF THE CHURCH

EVERYONE must admire sincerity. When we know that a person in his heart of hearts is earnest and sincere, we cannot but admire him, whether his views coincide with ours or not. In religious matters he may be, according to our views, decidedly wrong, but if he is sincere, we know he will accept the truth, let him once be convinced that it is the truth, even though it may wound his pride, and humiliate him.

Therefore, I was not disturbed one morning, when a somewhat angular woman, with fire in her eye, bounced into my study, sniffed in disdain at my proffered hand and words of greeting, and deliberately deposited her basket, small bag, umbrella, and a package on a chair, and punching a wisp of hair under her bonnet, commenced:

“Who do you think you are, anyway?”

One of my traits, whether fortunate or unfortunate, I have never been able to decide, is a strong sense of humor, and the situation certainly appealed to me as funny.

With as much of an Uriah Heep air as I could assume, I replied: "I am a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God. And though I disdain levity in religious matters, I fear you think me a sort of parody on God's handiwork."

An audible sniff was the only reply.

"Will you kindly be seated?" And I offered her a chair. "And may I inquire what I may do for you?"

Another sniff as she seated herself primly in the chair.

"I am the one who sent you some pamphlets the other day, asking that you distribute them to the poor prisoners, and you sent back word that you could not hand such literature to the prisoners. What did you mean?"

Immediately I saw the "lay of the land," as the saying goes. About two weeks before I had received a package of pamphlets, supposedly on religious subjects, but sandwiched in between Bible texts and euphemistic phrases, the Catholic Church was maligned. Instead of casting them into the fire, as I usually do, and paying no more attention to them, I wrote a rather severe letter to the sender, telling her I could

not give such things to the men. Here indeed was a chance for diplomacy, if I possessed the article.

“My good woman,” I began.

“Don’t you ‘good woman’ me!” snapped my visitor. “I know all about priests and their wiles. I want to know what you objected to in those pamphlets!”

“They cast slurs at my mother,” I replied. “Would you not disown a son if he would stand calmly by and allow someone to say slurring and untrue things about you?”

“Why, what are you talking about?” she stammered. “Those pamphlets said nothing about your mother, or anyone’s mother. You must be crazy.”

“But,” I persisted, “those pamphlets did certainly cast slurs at my mother, and that is something for which no real man would stand.”

“Oh,” she sniffed, “you mean the Catholic Church. Well, those pamphlets told the truth about that Church, something that should be known by everyone.”

And in a vehement flood of words she denounced what she undoubtedly thought the Church to be, her deceitful teaching, her immoral members, priests, nuns, and laity, and wound up by calling her a “cesspool of iniquity.”

“Do you know any Catholic people well?” I asked.

“Yes, I do,” she responded. “The M——’s live right next door to me, and they have a big family of children who go to the Catholic school, and will not go to any other.”

“What does Mr. M—— do?”

“He’s a bricklayer,” she replied.

“Are they bad neighbors?”

“No,” she answered, a little more calmly. “If they were not Catholics, I’d call them very good neighbors. Last winter, when I had the flu, Mrs. M—— was very good to me, and I really do not know what I should have done without her.”

She was forgetting her ire in praising what she could not help but recognize as good in her neighbors. So I ventured, “You surely do not think the M—— family are immoral, do you?”

“No, I know they are not,” she answered. “They are very good people, and the only thing I could have against them is their religion. They’re always going to church. Morning, noon, and night it seems they have church and are attending it.”

“If, as you say, the Church is a ‘cesspool of iniquity,’ do you not suppose that members of the M—— family, who are constantly attending that Church, would carry some of that slime with them, no matter how hard they tried to avoid it? For instance, if Mr. and Mrs. M—— go to confession, they doubtless know what the

confessional is. And if it is so evil, as you no doubt believe, do you think they would send their children to that confessional, and that those children would be good and obedient, as they evidently are? In this day, we are told, it is difficult to keep children in the straight and narrow way, in spite of every precaution. Does it stand to reason that children who are taught evil to be no crime would not practice those evils which are so prevalent?"

My visitor was commencing to see that the powder with which she had expected to carry on a violent warfare with me, was somewhat damp. And she was honest. Her hatred of the church was sincere, for she had been reared in the belief that all things Catholic were abominable. But she stuck to her guns, and came back with another broadside.

"But why do you not allow your people to attend other churches? Are you afraid they might learn the truth? And if, as they say you teach, your Church is the only one Christ established, isn't there some way a person may know it? A body'd think there would be some marks or something by which we would all know it."

"To answer your last question first," I said, "it is *The Only Church* Christ established, and there are marks by which it may always be

known. The Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic."

Her eyes snapped a challenge—"Prove it!"

"Well, unity or *oneness* means that the members of the true Church are united in the belief of the same doctrines of revelation, and acknowledge the authority of the same pastors—the Pope, bishops, and priests. In St. John, seventeenth chapter and twenty-first verse of your own Bible, you will find these words: 'That they may all be one; as Thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' Again, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, we read in the fourth chapter, third verse, 'Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—One body and one spirit, even as you are called in the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all Who is above all, and through all and in you all.' "

"I thought you hated the Bible and would not let your people read it," she said. "Do Catholics read the Bible?"

"Most assuredly," I replied, "and I will be glad to explain that, too, if we have time; but let us keep to the subject."

But she was determined to have her say, and in refutation of what I had said, quoted the

old sophism that Heaven is like a city in a great land. Any road one might take would eventually lead one to the city.

“But is that true?” I asked. “If you start for a city and take any road hit or miss, the chances are you will lose your way entirely. Besides, Christ was particular in pointing out this fallacy. In the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew and the eighteenth verse, He says: ‘Upon this rock I will build my Church’—not churches. And again in the twelfth chapter and the twenty-fifth verse—‘every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation,’ and all these different churches and sects teaching different doctrines and interpreting laws to suit themselves is anything but according to the wish of Christ, if we believe the Bible. You have read how Jesus calls His Church a sheepfold in St. John, tenth chapter and sixteenth verse—‘And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.’ Now will you name one other church that bears the mark of unity as the Catholic Church does?”

Another sniff.

“Her creed is the same as it was in the beginning,” I continued. “We cannot say Christ is divine today and not divine tomorrow. We cannot teach that baptism is necessary for some and not necessary for others. If we should get on the road which forgets to put up the sign-

post of a hell, we may find ourselves on that road and not on the one leading to heaven. And these signposts of hell are not fashionable to-day, as you know. In our creed we say 'I believe in the *Holy Catholic Church*'—"

"That does not make it holy," she retorted. "Besides we say that, too, in our creed."

"Yes," I replied, "but your creed is the one the Catholic Church gave to you."

"Humph!" She gave a little grunt. "I never believed in saying 'I believe in the holy Catholic Church,' when we are not Catholics. But saying you are holy does not make you so, anyway."

"You are right there," I agreed, "but holiness is one of the marks of the Church. Her founder, Jesus Christ, is holy; that you will admit?"

"Yes, that's true."

"At all times and in all places there have been men and women of the Church who were noted for their holiness. Great saints, whose very names are emblazoned from our countries, cities, lakes, and rivers, because of their holiness. Did you ever hear of Father Damien?"

"No. Who was he?"

"Father Damien was a priest who in very truth 'gave his life for his friends.' He was born in Tremeloo, Belgium, in 1840, and a few

years after his ordination to the priesthood, he was sent as a missionary to the lepers on the Hawaiian Islands. Here he stayed in that colony of poor beings from 1873 to 1889, not only caring for their souls, but ministering to the wants of their wretched bodies. Did you ever see a leper?"

The question was rather sudden, and a visible start was the only answer for a few seconds; then regaining her self-command, and wishing to be unyielding, she answered as tartly as ever "No. Have you?"

"No, I have not, but from what I have read and heard, it is a most loathsome disease. One afflicted with leprosy will live for years and years with the flesh actually rotting from his bones, with the spirit of life still within. The actual suffering is not so great, I have heard, but the experience of actual decay extending over so long a period of time, must be something terrible.

"Father Damien willingly, and with a faith which was unquenchable, bid adieu to this world while he was a young man, and voluntarily plunged himself into this most sordid life, with no hope of any possible reward, and there he stayed until he, too, contracted the disease, and after years of a living death, with his flesh actually putrefying on his limbs, died in 1889."

"How dreadful!" gasped my caller, forget-

ting her previous attitude. "What became of the poor things after that? Did no one help them after his death?"

"Yes indeed. Long before his death he had secured the aid of the good Franciscan sisters, who, without hope of ever seeing their friends again, opened a hospital and devoted their lives to the poor lepers. Since Father Damien's death, there have always been one or two priests and sisters to care for the unfortunates. Would you not call these priests and sisters holy?"

She did not reply, but I could see that she was thinking deeply. After a pause I continued:

"I could cite hundreds of cases among the saints of such sacrifices and devotion to God, that, in many cases, God Himself has given testimony of His pleasure in them. Yes, indeed, the Church has always had within her fold those who have given absolute proof of holiness of life."

For some time my visitor was lost in thought, and then, as if making a supreme effort to hold her hostile attitude, she snapped out "You've got good arguments, I'll say that, but do you mean to say all the good people, the holy people, I suppose you'd call them, are in the Catholic Church?"

"No, indeed," I replied. "My own mother knew nothing about the Catholic Church, at least nothing good, but much that was untrue,

and I know I never saw a better woman in my life."

I spoke with great earnestness, and noted that the fire in the eye of my caller was not so intense.

"What do you mean by Catholic?" she finally asked. "I always have had a horror of that word."

"So did I at one time," I responded, "but it is a word which means 'universal,' not confined to any particular place, country, nation, race, or people, but is the Church which Malachi saw in the future when he said, as is recorded in the Book of Malachi, first chapter and eleventh verse, 'From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles,' and when you read this passage, note particularly what follows, and see if your own Bible does not confirm the universality or catholicity of our Church. It says 'and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathens, saith the Lord of Hosts.'

"Now Mass is said every morning in the Catholic Church. Thus, when we are saying Mass here, other parts of the world are asleep. But while we are sleeping, Mass is being said somewhere else. The sun is rising somewhere all the time, and is setting somewhere all the

time. So, 'From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same,' incense is offered and a pure offering is being made. What other church can say it is offering a continual and pure offering with incense?"

"Well, what is incense?" came next.

"It is the spices and gum which are burned in the Catholic Church during certain ceremonies. It gives out a sweet perfume, and—"

"Ain't that silly?" she interrupted. "Seems like heathenism to me."

"No, it is not silly, but quite in accordance with worship," I replied. "In the one-hundred and forty-first psalm we read 'Let my prayer be sent forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of the hands as the evening sacrifice.' Again we read in Exodus, thirtieth chapter and seventh verse, 'And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning.' In the first chapter of Luke, we read more concerning incense. So we may see that it is in strict accordance with worship. The sweet perfume and gentle smoke wafting upward, indicate that our prayers should be sweet and acceptable in the sight of God, and should ascend as constantly as possible."

"That's a kind of pretty conceit," she remarked.

"The prophecies declared that the Church which Christ was to found should be world-wide,

and Christ gave the command to His Apostles to 'teach all nations.' He promised that the Spirit of Truth (the Holy Ghost) would remain with the Church until the end of time. Hence, in spite of the persecutions and hatred of the world for that Church, she has lived, grown, and does indeed extend over the entire world. Jesus said the world persecuted Him, and we could not expect anything else, for 'the servant is not greater than the Master,' and His Church would always be hated."

"Is the Catholic Church the same everywhere?" she asked. "And is that the reason why one sees so many 'Greasers' and 'Dagos' there?"

"That is the exact reason. It is Catholic or universal, and no difference who or where a person is, the service is the same, and each one understands, because he has it all in his prayer book."

Suddenly the fire returned to her eye, and the audible sniff denoted a new attack.

"That's one thing I can't approve of in the Catholic Church: Everything is in Latin. How do you suppose common people are to understand your sermons if they don't know Latin, and you can't make me believe they do?"

"No, very few know Latin, but that is the catholic or universal language of the Church, nevertheless. We do not preach in Latin, but

in the language which is understood. Here in America it is English. In France it would be French; in Italy, Italian. But the Mass, or unbloody sacrifice of the cross, which Malachi prophesied, is in Latin. But while the prayer book usually gives the Latin text, one will always find the same text in English, French, Italian, etc., and every Catholic understands the Mass, and knows just what the priest is doing."

"Well, why do you stand with your back to the people, and pay no attention to them when you are preaching or 'saying Mass,' as you call it?"

"We always face the people when we preach, but the Mass is a sacrifice offered to God by a priest at which the people assist with their prayers. They can see the body and blood of our Lord when he holds it aloft and there is no distraction."

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed the woman. "Do you mean to tell me the Lord's body and blood are on your altar when you say Mass? I don't believe it!"

"If you have never read or heard of it before, I do not blame you," I said. "But nevertheless, it is true. I cannot take the time to explain it just now, but if you will come back some other time, I will be glad to go through the whole catechism with you and answer all your questions. But please do not judge us until

you know. I venture to say that many things I have explained have been cleared up in your mind."

"Yes," she admitted rather grudgingly, "that's true. But there's one more thing you said would prove your Church was the one Christ founded. A mark I'd know it by. I forget just what it was."

"It is that the Catholic Church is *apostolic*," I said. "I told you that the marks by which it may be known by all is that it is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Apostolicity implies succession and that the true Church must always and in all places teach the same doctrine delivered to the Apostles by Jesus Christ. A doctrine or dogma is a truth. And these truths once delivered by the Apostles must be accepted by all who wish to be really Christian. I know how difficult it is for one to hear us say the Catholic Church is the only one Christ founded, for I was not always a Catholic; but it is true. The Church, St. Paul tells us, 'is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone,' in his Epistle to the Ephesians, second chapter and twentieth verse. So the doctrine which she teaches must be based upon His teaching. In his Epistle to the Galatians, first chapter and eighth verse, he says, 'But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you

than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' Even St. Paul himself, though miraculously called and instructed by God, had hands imposed upon him, lest others be tempted by his example to preach without Apostolic warrant, as we read in Acts, thirteenth chapter."

"Well, you seem to know a great deal about the Bible for one who, as I have always been told, and thought, hates it. I suppose you consider your ordination gives you the right to teach?"

"Yes, but not my own versions of the Bible. Hands were laid upon me as they were upon St. Paul. In St. Paul's Epistle to Titus he tells Titus, in the first chapter and fifth verse, 'For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee,' and this ordaining of priests has continued ever since."

After quoting several other passages from Scripture, I said:

"You know there was no such thing as Protestantism or Protestant churches of any kind until centuries after Christ died, so no other church, denomination or sect can lay claim to Apostolicity. Now the Catholic Church is our spiritual mother here, and do you wonder that I would not permit her to be maligned, or to be declared false? The pamphlets you sent me were

filled with unkind things about the Catholic Church, and besides were not even teaching the scripture correctly, hence, my refusal to hand them to the prisoners and our objections to Catholics attending other churches."

"Well, I ain't convinced," she asserted, "but I'm not sorry I have had this talk with you. I'm going to read and inquire about it all, for I was told you'd try to pull the wool over my eyes," and gathering up her belongings, she started for the door.

"Will you not shake hands?" I asked. "And if you want me to explain anything else, will you not come and feel that I will do the best I can?"

"Yes, I will," she responded, and holding out her hand in a stiff manner, said good-by.

CHAPTER VII

THE SACRAMENTS AND BAPTISM

“I KNOW I’m late, Father, and I’m afraid you’ll not think my excuse a good one either. You know our U. played Northwest U. this afternoon, and I became so interested in the game that I entirely forgot how time was flying,” and he hung his coat and hat on the hall tree and came into my study. “Mary had to go home, so I had to come alone.”

John Martin was good to look at. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and with clear gray eyes set in an intelligent face, which, nevertheless, gave one the impression of carelessness. There was a note of apology in his voice, and his manner was rather strained, for he had never before come alone for instructions. I was preparing him in religion for baptism before he married Mary Dale, a young woman who had been a pupil of the academy.

“Well, you must be convinced by this time that I have neither hoofs nor horns, so perhaps

we can get along without Mary this time," I observed jokingly. "How was the game, and who won? I should like to have seen it, but could hardly get away this afternoon."

"It was a splendid game, and, of course, we won," and he launched into details in which Mary's name occurred very often. At last I interrupted him with:

"Do you know, John, I have not yet decided whether you are receiving these instructions because you really want to be a Catholic, or just to please Mary. Which is it?"

I felt that with all his seeming carelessness he was thoroughly honest, and so was not surprised when he looked at me soberly, and replied:

"I don't know, Father. Of course, I want to please Mary, but if it were not for her, I do not think I should bother myself about religion."

My heart warmed toward the boy for his candor, and I determined to do all I could to make him realize how important religion is to one. So I talked to him earnestly about the necessity of prayer which brings grace and eventually blossoms into faith. I spoke to him of God, of the reason for which we are created, and the utter impotence of this life without genuine religion.

"What do your parents think of your becoming a Catholic?" I asked.

"I haven't told them yet," he confessed, "but they will not care, I know. Dad never had any religion, and Mother goes to church occasionally, 'for the looks of it,' she says. But they both think Mary's a peach."

I smiled at his boyishness, and offered a silent prayer for grace to instruct him aright. Then taking up the catechism, a small one, I asked "What is a sacrament?"

He answered glibly enough, "A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace."

"What three things are necessary to constitute a sacrament?" I continued.

He seemed puzzled, because it was not one of the questions in the catechism he had.

"I don't know," he replied finally.

"But you have just told me."

The puzzled look deepened, and then as he thought over the answer he had given to my question, he said:

"Oh, I suppose they are the outward sign, grace, and they must be instituted by Christ."

"Yes," I amplified, "visible sign, invisible grace—for, of course, the Holy Ghost does not descend upon each one visibly as He did upon the Apostles—and the institution by Christ."

"Do you mean that the Holy Ghost really descended visibly upon the Apostles, Father?"

"That is exactly what I mean," I responded.

“What did He look like?”

Incredulous seriousness was in his tone, so I took up the Bible, and turning to the Acts of the Apostles, I asked him to read, beginning with the second chapter. I gave him the Protestant Bible, for I have formed the habit of proving our doctrines from that book rather than from the Catholic Bible, of which non-Catholics seem to have a doubt, though I knew that John had no such feeling.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,” he read aloud, “they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as to fire, and it sat upon each one of them; and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

“Well I’ll be jiggered!” he cried, his eyes round with wonder. “But why did they speak in ‘other tongues?’”

“So that it did not make any difference what language a person knew, he might understand what the Apostles had to say. For Jesus had told them to go and teach *All Nations* about Him and the redemption of men from sin.”

There was silence for a time, because John was eagerly reading the rest of the chapter.

Looking up at last he asked "Will this grace come to me when I am baptized?"

"Undoubtedly, but, of course, it will be in proportion to your earnestness and desire for it."

"Will you explain to me, Father, how these things you say are in every sacrament—outward visible sign, invisible grace, and the institution by Christ—will be in the sacrament of baptism when I receive it?"

The indifference had disappeared, and I was much pleased to see that he was taking a genuine interest in the lesson. So I continued:

"First, there will be the outward visible sign—the pouring of water and the pronouncing of the words, 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' By this outward sign invisible grace is infused into the heart, just as the gentle rain falling upon the seed hidden in the ground causes new life to spring up in the dormant seed, and it grows, expands, and eventually becomes a wonderful plant with blossoms, and in turn, seeds in abundance like unto itself. This growth in the soul, by the grace of God, becomes faith, and the greater the faith, the more grace does God supply to enable it to grow. Hence, the more we pray for this faith in sincerity and earnestness, the stronger will grace grow within us. This is emphasized by the words of St. Peter, which you learned in the thirty-eighth verse of the

chapter you have just read. ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’”

“Is that where Christ instituted the sacrament of baptism?” inquired John.

“No, though some people would have us believe it was, and, consequently, baptize in the name of Jesus alone. The sacrament was instituted by Christ as we see in the twenty-eighth chapter and nineteenth verse of St. Matthew, ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’”

“Do you really think a person must be baptized to be saved?” And then, with a slight flush, “I fear, Father, you’ll think I am the questioner, but I should like to really understand.”

“You are perfectly right, my boy. I am always delighted when people ask questions. Many times great stumblingblocks are thus removed. Ask as many questions as you please. I do believe a person must be baptized to be saved, for Jesus clearly taught it. Man disobeyed God in the first place, and if we would again be in His favor, we must obey the injunction of Christ, Who is indeed God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Turn to the sixteenth chapter of St. Mark, and read the sixteenth verse.”

Instead of trying to find it, he frankly gave

the Bible to me and asked me to find it, since he knew very little about the Bible. So I turned to the passage, and he read "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

I was much amused when he looked up and characteristically remarked "Whew! That's tough!"

"Yes," I laughed, "but this is mentioned again in St. John, third chapter and fifth verse, when our Lord, speaking to Nicodemus, said 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water, and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' So it is a condition 'sine qua non,' if you understand Latin."

"It means 'nothing doing,' or something like that, doesn't it? So if a man is not baptized there's nothing doing about his getting into heaven."

I laughed outright.

"Well, that's what we might call a loose translation, but I think you have the idea," and he joined me in the laugh.

"Is it possible to receive any of the other sacraments until one has been baptized?" he questioned.

"No, this is the first sacrament. In the chapter from which I have just quoted, Jesus had told Nicodemus that unless one was born again he could not see the kingdom of God, and Nico-

demus, misunderstanding Him, objected that a man could not be born again when he was old, and Jesus explained by speaking of baptism—water and the Holy Ghost. It is quite impossible for one to do anything until he is born physically, so, too, one cannot do aught in a spiritual sense until he is born (baptized) in a spiritual way."

"I believe you baptize children, infants, also," said John. "Of course you do not think they have committed sin, so why is that necessary?"

"They have not committed any *actual sin*," I answered, "but they inherit original sin, the same as every human being, from our first parents. This is a bar to heaven unless they are baptized, for we must not forget that our reinstatement in God's grace is dependent upon obedience (since man sinned at first by disobedience), and we must not forget that God owes us nothing whatever. It is a strong incentive, too, for parents to see that their children are baptized."

"But what becomes of a little child if it dies before baptism and has not committed any 'actual sin,' as you call it? Does it go to hell?"

"That is a question which non-Catholics generally misunderstand. The Church teaches that the sight of God's face and heaven are gifts reserved for only the baptized. But God will not punish anyone for that for which he is not

blamable. I cannot wonder that a misunderstanding of this question gives a certain doubt to one in regard to God's mercy. Doubtless, one dying without baptism and without any actual sin, will not see the face of God, or be in heaven, but he will be naturally happy. For instance, before you met Mary Dale, if anyone had told you you would never meet her, it would not have grieved you, and you would not consider it a punishment, for at that time Mary Dale meant no more to you than Sally Smith or Jennie Jones. But now to be deprived of the sight of Mary and of her company would be a real hardship to you, would it not?"

"I'll say it would," John responded with emphasis.

"Now, if one never sees God or heaven he will never know what he has missed, and the natural happiness of which I speak will be a happiness, where everything, according to your natural desires, will be complete. You can imagine nothing more, and would therefore miss nothing more. But having once seen God and known what heaven is, the loss would be very great indeed. Just as the taking of Mary out of your life would be a grievous punishment to you now, perhaps the worst punishment in hell will be the knowledge of what we have lost."

"Well, you certainly do know how to send out the S. O. S., Father," was his only comment.

"So far, you tell me, you have never known any religion. You have heard various Christians speak of its comforts. You have heard them say how much consolation it brings to them; how, when trials and sorrows and temptations assail them, they can rest upon their faith in God, and even the hardships of this world become easy to bear, nay, great saints have considered them real pleasures, for their faith was so great that they saw God's hand in all. They accept everything in the Christian spirit. Now, not having experienced this sort of comfort, can you appreciate it?"

"No, Father, I cannot," he replied soberly.

"But when you get older and when real trials have come, if you are baptized and are really faithful, you will then know and appreciate the comforts a genuine Christian has."

"I suppose you consider only small children as sinless?" John asked.

"Generally speaking, yes. For of those who have reached the age of reason, and know right from wrong, very few indeed are absolutely without fault. Of course, one who has never had his reason would be classed with infants."

"Would you baptize a feeble-minded person?"

"Certainly, for he is in the same class as an infant. He has no power of reason, and cannot exercise his will with intelligence," I replied. "Naturally, we do not say just what kind

of hereafter a sinless unbaptized person will have, but we do say that no one will be punished for a fault not his own."

"At the time of Christ, were children baptized?" was the next question.

"We have no Biblical account of it, but we may assume that the Apostles upon whom the Holy Ghost descended in tongues of fire, understood and did what Christ wanted. We know from The Acts of the Apostles (xvi, 15) that St. Paul baptized Lydia and her household. And again, in the same chapter, thirty-third verse, how he baptized the jailer 'and all his (family).' In First Corinthians, first chapter, and sixteenth verse, we also read how St. Paul says 'I baptized also the household of Stephanas.'

I was amused at the manner in which John was catechising me, for his next query was "Why do you not baptize as they did when Christ was on earth?"

I looked questioningly at him, to grasp his meaning, and he went on:

"Last summer one day I was passing a river, and a great crowd of people was on the bank. I stopped the car and got out, thinking some one might have been drowned, but just as I came up a man led a woman out a little way from the shore, and soused her, I beg your pardon, Father, I mean baptized her by putting her

under the water. I asked what it was, and why, and was told that it was the way in which Christ was baptized. Is that true?"

"There is no authority for it, though some would contend that it was the manner in which St. John the Baptist baptized our Lord. Tradition does not bear them out, for the earliest pictures of Christ's baptism represent Him standing in the water with St. John pouring water upon His head from a shell."

"But is their baptism all right? Mary told me that anyone could baptize, even I, if I really meant to do what Christ did."

"Mary was right. If anyone really intends to do what our Lord wanted done and uses natural water and says the correct words, the person so baptized has really received valid baptism. But, of course, it is allowable for Catholics only in case of necessity, or where a priest cannot be brought. Thus, when a baptized non-Catholic is received into the Church, he is baptized again, 'conditionally,' we call it, that is, on condition that the first baptism was not administered validly."

"But how about that river baptism? Was that valid, as you call it? It is not the way you baptize."

"Nevertheless, if one has the right intention in baptizing, and the water flows over the skin,

and the correct words are used, 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' it makes no difference whether the water is poured, or sprinkled, or one is put under the water."

"Well, you Catholics do not let anyone get away from you if you can help it, do you?" and shy admiration was in his tone. Then, after a pause, and in a gentler tone, "My Buddy was killed in the war. He wasn't a Catholic, but he was square and all right. Do you think he was lost?"

"I cannot judge, John," I answered quietly, "for I did not know him, but if as you say he was 'square,' and that squareness was with his God as far as he knew, I doubt not he was saved. You know there are three kinds of baptism."

"Yes, but I do not think Jimmie was ever baptized in any way. He would hardly belong to the people who put them under the water, nor was he baptized by pouring or sprinkling, either."

"I did not mean the mode of baptism, but the species of baptism," I replied, "if I may so call it."

"How's that?"

"Well, there is the baptism of water, as explained, the baptism of desire, and the baptism of blood."

John sat bolt upright in his chair. Evidently the baptism of blood referred to his Buddy, and when I did not continue at once, he cried.

“Gee, Father, go on! I never thought I could be so interested in a lesson in religion.”

“Baptism of desire,” I said, “is when one sincerely wishes to please God, lives as well as he can, and would do everything he knew God would want him to do. If he was honest and sincere, ‘square,’ as you would call it, not only with his Buddy, but with everyone, including himself and God, then, whether he had ever heard of the doctrine of baptism or not, and should die, he would doubtless have the baptism of desire. Of course, if one once knows that baptism is necessary for salvation, and refuses it, then desire would not suffice, for he would not be doing God’s will.”

“Then I know Buddy was saved, for he was certainly a good kid,” and he settled back in his chair, apparently contented.

“When I was receiving instructions in the Catholic religion, and was about to be baptized, a companion and I were crossing a river in a very old unsafe boat. We had on great rubber boots, and for a time our position was perilous, and by the time the boat reached the shore it was ready to sink, and in fact did sink. We waded ashore, and I asked my companion as we took off our boots to drain the water from

them, ‘what would have become of me had I been drowned?’ He was a devout Catholic, and explained quite readily that I had the baptism of desire, and would have been saved.”

“What is baptism of blood?” came next, and I replied:

“If an unbaptized person gives his life for Christ (as many of the early martyrs did) his death is more than an equivalent for baptism, for he dies not only sanctified, but he will wear a martyr’s crown. He is baptized in his own blood. Jesus tells in the tenth chapter and the thirty-second verse of St. Matthew, ‘whosoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven.’

“Now let us return to the original subject of the lesson—the sacraments. In baptism, as we have seen, the three things necessary for a sacrament—an outward visible sign, invisible grace, and the institution by Jesus Christ—are all present. This is true of every sacrament. How many sacraments are there?”

“Seven,” he answered promptly. “Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.”

“Very good. I see it is easy for you to give the answers of the catechism. You have a good memory, and I suppose Mary will not have to complain of your forgetting to mail her letters or buy a yard of ribbon for her.”

Immediately John's face was suffused with a crimson which enhanced his charm. He did not reply, so I continued:

"Which are the sacraments of the dead?"

"Baptism and penance."

"As you know, it does not mean physically dead," I explained, "but dead in sin, for every mortal sin kills the life of grace in the soul. Baptism, first of all, infuses this grace, as we have learned, and if no mortal sin is committed by the recipient, he grows in grace. If, however, a baptized person is so unfortunate as to fall into mortal sin, he can be restored to spiritual life and grace through the sacrament of penance. Hence, these two sacraments are called the sacraments of the dead."

"It is easy now for me to understand why confirmation, Holy Eucharist, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony are called sacraments of the living, for one must be in a state of grace, as you call it, in order to receive them."

"Exactly. You could not feed a physically dead person with any kind of food, neither could you feed a spiritually dead person with any kind of spiritual food. Hence, the sacraments of the dead."

"What would happen if one were to receive the sacraments of the living when he is dead in sin?" asked John.

"His sin would only be committing a greater

sin, for he would be abusing a sacred thing. This sin is called a ‘sacrilege.’”

“Some of the sacraments we may receive again and again, may we not, Father?”

“Yes, we may receive all of them more than once, with the exception of baptism, confirmation, and holy orders.”

“Why is this?”

“These three sacraments imprint an indelible or spiritual mark on the soul which remains forever. It is on the soul even after death, and is for our honor and glory if we are faithful to Christ, and to our shame and punishment if we are unfaithful.”

“My, but your religion is strict. It offers so many things that are really wonderful and great, and it is not afraid to tell us where to get off. I like it, and yet I don’t like it. You see, Father,” he went on after a moment’s pause, “I am trying to make my position clear to you. I know I don’t use the right words, always, but some way I feel you are a regular fellow, as they say, and I really want to know and talk over everything. I want to marry Mary, but I want to believe in her church before I become a Catholic,” and he arose preparatory to departing.

“And, my dear boy, I wouldn’t think for a moment of baptizing you or ‘making a Catholic of you,’ unless I was convinced you did really

believe, not only for Mary's sake, but for your own. Now prepare the next three lessons in your catechism, and come next Friday evening primed with questions. By the way," I continued, as we walked to the door, "you might bring Mary with you Friday evening, if it will not be too much bother."

"Father, you're a brick!" said John as he closed the door.

CHAPTER VIII

CONFESSiON

TAP! TAP! TAP! I recognized the knock of Nora, my good old housekeeper, and knew from the gentleness of the sound that she was hoping I might be dozing and would not hear her; for she was aware of my spending a rather strenuous afternoon in the confessional, and hoped she could say to the caller with truth that I did not answer.

“God bless the faithful old soul,” I said mentally as I bade her enter. She came in deprecatingly, bearing a card with the name, James C. Fallon, M. D. “Please send him in,” I directed, disregarding the look that plainly said “Let me send him away.”

He was rather a striking-looking man, perhaps thirty-five years of age, with traces of gray just beginning to show above the temples. His manner was somewhat uneasy as I placed a chair and asked what I could do for him.

"I really do not know whether you can do anything for me or not," he replied, "for my errand is a delicate one. I have a patient at the hospital, a young woman who is very ill. She has been delirious, and in her wanderings has spoken of her religion, and especially of confession. I know she is a Catholic, and am convinced that if she could go to confession—I believe that is what you call it—her mind would then be at ease, and she might possibly pull through."

"At what hospital is she?" I asked. "Of course I will go to her at once."

"She is at the Antonia," he answered, "but I fear the excitement of your coming unannounced might be inimical to her case. I was very reticent about coming to you, but I know of cases where the visit of the priest has been of inestimable value."

"I take it that you are not Catholic?"

"No, I do not adhere to any creed, but I have great respect for your faith. It always seems so tangible," and he flecked a speck of dust from his knee.

"It is tangible," I agreed, "and confession touches the innermost spring of the soul."

He cast a questioning look at me, and then asked in an embarrassed way "What is confession, Father? I fear I have no right to ask the question, but it has always been a puzzle

to me. Of course, if it is a delicate subject, or you would rather not answer, it will be all right to tell me so. One hears so much both for and against it, that I am really curious."

"I shall be most happy to answer your question, Doctor, and there is nothing 'delicate' in the sense you mean, nor anything whatever of which to be ashamed. But first, if the case of which you speak is imperative, I must go to the young woman immediately."

"No, Miss X—— is in no immediate danger of death, but I would rather you did not see her tonight or until I might prepare her for your coming. If we can agree as to a method of procedure, you might come tomorrow."

"Well," I conceded, "I will tell you what confession really is, and you may judge if I am right in saying it is the greatest balm for sinners on the face of the earth. It is a sacrament, and is called the *sacrament of penance*."

Then I explained the fall of man, its dire consequences to all humanity, and the promise of the redemption. "And," I concluded, "inasmuch as man fell from grace through disobedience, so too must his redemption come through submission and obedience. Christ is the Redeemer, and He founded a Church and placed therein all those things necessary for the saving of mankind. Confession of sins to a duly authorized priest is one of the duties Christ

imposes. Penance is therefore a sacrament in which the sins committed after baptism are forgiven. You are not affiliated with any particular church, you say?"

"No, Father, I can't say that I am. My people were very good Presbyterians, and surely did their best for me. But I never joined any Church. Why do you ask?"

"Because I usually find that Protestants are anxious for proofs of our faith to be taken from the Bible, while 'indifferentists,' if I may use the word, care little for the Bible, but will listen more closely to reasoning."

"Well, I learned some texts from the Bible when I was a youngster, for in our Sunday School, prizes were offered for it, and I have read the Bible through. But I like reasoning, too," and there was a whimsical gleam in his eyes.

"Very good," I said. "From reading the Bible, what would you consider the main object of our Lord in coming to earth? He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, vigor to the paralyzed limbs, and restored to cleanliness the poor leprous body. He even raised the dead to life. Would you deduce from these acts that His mission was that of a physician?"

"No," thoughtfully. "I should say these things were done in order to draw men unto Himself, gain their confidence and prepare them

for His real work, which I am quite convinced was saving mankind from sin. You know in Matthew (i, 21) the angel said to Joseph 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus,' and the word Jesus means, I believe, *Savior*. The rest of the quotation, 'for He shall save His people from their sins,' seems to show exactly what His mission was. He was not to be a physician of the body, though He often did the physician's work, but a *Savior from sin*."

I was charmed at the doctor's clear-cut answer, and felt there would be little difficulty in his grasping the meaning of the sacrament of penance. It is always easy to explain Catholic doctrine to an intelligent person, for he is used to reasoning.

"Now what do you consider the greatest evil in the world?" I asked.

"Sin," he replied unhesitatingly, "just as I consider the most important thing is the salvation of the soul."

I was actually astonished, for I did not expect this from him. So many physicians seem afraid to say such things, even though they may believe them. He saw my astonishment, and continued.

"Oh, I know many physicians would not admit this, but I can never conceive a really great physician being anything but Christian in his ethics. For if one did not believe in the human

soul and its prerogative of eternal life, why should he strive to cure the body in which the soul resides while in this world, any more than he would strive to keep alive a dog or a worm?"

"Beautifully expressed," I said admiringly. "Hence, as St. Augustine so aptly points out, that while the Gospel relates only three resurrections of the body from death, our Lord while here upon earth raised thousands of souls to the life of grace. But tell me, Doctor, knowing humanity as you do, and being intimately acquainted with the many lapses of man into sin, did it never strike you as singular that our Lord left no remedy at hand for this certain kind of disease? He did not promise to come to each individual and restore him to grace, yet He came to save all mankind from sin at all times."

"Yes, I have often pondered over that, and while I believe a person might understand his own ailment, and administer effectually in some cases, yet he comes to the physician when there is serious difficulty; so too, do I think the right kind of religion must be administered in cases of serious sin."

"Again you have reasoned well," I responded. "Man can go directly to God, and is urged to do so, even in occasions of sin. But Jesus, the Great Physician, left an unfailing remedy in His Church for ordinary cases, and it is very evi-

dent that this remedy is obtained through the Sacrament of Penance. By 'ordinary cases' I mean, wherever it is possible, to go to confession to a duly authorized priest."

It was necessary to explain to him how Christ founded a Church, an infallible Church, and promised to be with that Church to the end of time. I pointed out that it was always the custom of God to carry out His plans, both in the old and the new law, by appointing human agents to execute His will. Thus, when He wished to deliver the children of Israel from bondage, in Egypt, He did not come personally to conduct them, but placed Moses at their head as their deliverer. When they were crossing the Red Sea in their flight, the waters were commanded to part through the agency of Moses. Moses also struck the rock from which the water flowed to quench their thirst. Naaman was cured of leprosy through the prophet Elisha. When Paul was going to Damascus with hatred in his heart toward the Christians, our Saviour did not personally restore his sight, but Paul was sent to Ananias, who restored his sight and baptized him. The same St. Paul tells us in his second epistle to the Corinthians (v, 18-21) "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors of Christ."

"Thus," I continued, "God sent Christ to reconcile sinners, and Christ, who is God, sends us priests. We are His ambassadors, 'as my Father hath sent Me, even so I send you.'" (John xx, 21.)

He had picked up the Bible on the table, and turned to the text quoted. "Ah," he remarked, as his eyes scanned the following verses, "I see where you get your authority for forgiveness of sins, for this follows in the next two verses, 'And when He had said this, He breathed upon them, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained".' This, of course, implies the confession of sins, for you are to be the judge as to their worthiness. Are there other places where this is declared?"

"Assuredly," I replied, and asking him to turn to St. Matthew (xvi, 13-20) I waited while he read it. His voice, a clear baritone, was most pleasing as he read aloud:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying 'Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?'

"And they said 'Some say thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.'

"He said unto them 'But whom say ye that I am?'

“And Simon-Peter answered and said “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.”

“And Jesus answered and said unto him ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

“‘And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

“‘And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed in heaven.’”

The Doctor closed the Bible and remarked:

“That is quite clear, both as to Christ’s appointment of St. Peter as the Rock or foundation of His Church, as well as the power to forgive sins. It is strange that I have read these passages a number of times, and have never thought of their significance before.”

“The power of ‘binding and loosing’ is repeated again, if you will turn to the eighteenth chapter and the eighteenth verse of St. Matthew, just beyond where you were reading.”

He did as directed, and read how the Apostles were all together at one time when Christ said “Verily I say unto you, ‘Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;

and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' ”

As he stopped reading, I remarked.

“Thus you see how explicitly He gave this power to all Apostles. And from that time on they and their successors have exercised that power. In the verse you read first, Christ plainly says ‘sins may be retained or forgiven. He had risen from the dead, and wished to bring peace to the world. And He knew sins committed after baptism would be in nearly everyone’s life, so He left this greatest of legacies to benefit His church.”

“Of course, you would not say God could not forgive sins without the intervention of the priest, if He so chose?” said the Doctor in an apologetic tone. “I am not meaning to be impertinent, Father, but I wish to know just what you teach in regard to this.”

“Most assuredly He could,” I answered, “and He does so in extraordinary cases, as I said. I might also ask if you believe God could cure a sick man without the intervention of a physician?”

“Certainly He could.”

“Then would you approve of those who teach that all services of a physician are of no avail?”

Dr. Fallon looked at me with an amused smile as he said:

"You've got me in a corner, Father. I do believe that God can and does cure the ailments of the body without the aid of a physician in some cases where He sees fit, but the usual way is through the ministrations of a physician."

"Then our arguments for the cure of the soul as well as of the body would be the same. From experience we know it is much easier to tell God our sins in secret than to go to a fellow man. But it is just this faith and humility which God asks, and which gives strength to the penitent."

"I have read somewhere that confession was introduced into the Church in the twelfth century. Have you ever heard that, Father?"

"Yes," I replied, "and at one time I supposed it was true, since it was recorded as a historical fact. But the absurdity of the assertion is enough, without proving its falsity by the testimony of the early Christian historians, or as we call them, the Fathers of the Church. Confession at best is difficult for one, and only the strong belief of Catholics that it is instituted and commanded by Christ prompts them to confess their sins to the priest. How then would it be possible for a band of men to arise and tell the people it was a command of Christ, more than a thousand years after Christ's death?"

"In the Acts of the Apostles (xix, 18) we read 'And many that believed came, and confessed and showed their deeds.' And among the early Fathers of the Church we find such men as Saints Basil, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom teaching this doctrine. These men are quoted very often by non-Catholics, as you doubtless know."

"All this is very convincing, Father," responded the Doctor, "but of what avail would confession be unless there were genuine sorrow for sin?"

"None whatever, for if one confessed without sorrow, repentance, and a purpose of amendment, he had better stay away from confession, for he would be committing a greater sin—sacrilege. Sacrilege, as you probably know, is the abuse of a sacred thing. And confession without sorrow would be abusing the grace of God."

"That clears up the matter very much," remarked the physician with evident relief. "I do not know why, but I have always had an idea that the average Catholic thought confession alone was all that was necessary."

"To receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily, every child in the catechism class knows there are five things necessary. First, examination of conscience; second, sorrow for sins; third, resolution of amendment; fourth, confes-

sion of sins; and fifth, acceptance of the penance the priest imposes."

"Do you mean to say that if a man is given to cursing he must tell the priest in the confessional how many times it has happened?"

"Yes. And you can see that it is one incentive toward the correction of a sin which may even be a habit."

"But the sorrow for sin and the resolution never again to offend God," he continued, "that seems very hard to me. I myself give way to profanity, I am sorry to say, and sometimes I curse without thinking. I know it is a bad habit, but if I should confess it, I know I would fall again into the same fault. Would that prevent me from making a good confession?"

"Not if you had the right intention. You must say with sincerity 'with God's help, I will not curse again'; you must take God into the contract, and then by His grace and earnest endeavor you would gradually overcome the bad habit. As a physician, you know there are certain diseases which you cannot cure all at once, or by one treatment. But if the patient is willing to cooperate, and makes a strong effort under your direction, you will eventually cure him. So it is with sins and the confessional."

"I see. But what is the penance of which you speak?"

"It is usually some prayers which are prescribed, partly as a remedy against a relapse into sin, and a means of amendment, and partly as a punishment for sin. You know God does not always remit the temporal punishment due to sin when it is confessed, though the eternal punishment is forgiven. This is apparent from the words of the prophet Nathan to David (II Samuel, xii,13-14) 'The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.' It is in accordance with the justice of God to demand of us some penal satisfaction for our rebellion against Him, and for our sinful attachment to His creatures, and also to deter us by the dread of punishment from relapsing into sin."

"Suppose a person should forget or neglect to perform his penance, as you call it, would his sins not be forgiven?"

"Its nonperformance does not render the sacrament invalid or fruitless," I replied, "provided the penitent had the intention of performing it. To be sure, if it comes to his memory later, he will then perform the penance."

After a moment's thought, the doctor asked "May I suppose a case, Father?"

"Certainly. As many as you wish."

"Well, suppose Mr. A has wronged Mr. B.

That he has stolen Mr. B's property, or has detracted from Mr. B's good name falsely. Could Mr. A go to confession, and would his confession be good if he did go?"

"That is well put. Mr. A could go to confession, but to make a worthy confession, he must acknowledge the truth. The priest or confessor would be obliged to demand of Mr. A either restitution for what he had stolen or the restoration of Mr. B's good name, if he had detracted from it. If this could be done, and Mr. A refused to do it, all the words of absolution in the world which any priest might say would be of no avail. And if the priest knew that Mr. A refused, he would not give any sort of absolution. Is that clear?"

"Partly; but suppose Mr. A had stolen a large amount of money and had spent it, and had nothing with which to make restitution, though willing to do so if he had the means?"

"Then Mr. A would have to promise to make good as far as he was able, and to continue doing so until the full amount had been restored. It might take a long time, perhaps his whole life; still, it must be done."

"But suppose Mr. A should die before he had made such a restitution? Would his sin be forgiven?"

"If he had the intention of restoring the money as prescribed. No one can do the im-

possible, and God would not condemn one for what is impossible."

"How would a man restore another's good name?" was the next question.

"By admitting to the person or persons to whom he had defamed the innocent man that the story of defamation was false."

"We sometimes read in newspapers of one's making restitution to a company or an individual without disclosing his identity. Do you suppose it is on account of confession?"

"Sometimes it is," I replied.

"Then may a person make such restitution without disclosing his identity?"

"Often this is done. For instance, if Mr. X is working for a company and has stolen an amount of money, and he makes restitution openly, it might endanger his position, and his family come to want through his loss of place. It would do no harm if Mr. X should send the amount anonymously, and this is done in many cases. Hence this is the reason we read at times of stolen goods being thus restored."

After a considerable time, Dr. Fallon asked in an embarrassed manner "What is the secret of the confessional? Opposition and even hatred for your Church are often engendered by this expression, and I am curious to know."

I laughed, for I remembered so well how at one time I thought this "secret of the confes-

sional" implied something entirely different from what it really is.

"It is simply that nothing whatever confided to the priest in the confessional is, or can be, divulged under any circumstances whatever. Of course, if there is something that must be spoken of outside of the confessional, then the priest must first get the permission of the penitent to speak of it, though this is of very rare occurrence. You may readily see the wisdom of this. For instance, if a man had committed murder, would he be likely to ask advice of the priest in the confessional, if he had suspicion of his crime becoming public knowledge?

"I know of a case where a supposedly Catholic man wooed and won an excellent Catholic girl. They were to be married, and just before the ceremony the man told the priest in the confessional that he was already a married man with a wife living. The priest expostulated with him, but the man would not consent to give up the young woman nor let the priest tell, and the man went through the ceremony of marriage. It was only after years when the man was accused and convicted of bigamy, that the truth came out. The man told the young woman how he had compelled the priest to secrecy."

"But suppose the state demanded to know the truth and asked the priest on the witness stand? Would he not be obliged to tell?"

"No, for what is told in the confessional is the same as told to God Himself, and no one nor any court can make God divulge a secret."

"Well, Father, I certainly thank you for the very interesting information you have given me, and I assure you that I shall be more zealous than ever in advising confession when I have Catholic patients," and the doctor took his departure.

I will only add that the young woman in the hospital received me most gratefully the next day and gladly went to confession. Her greatest fault was the neglect of her religion. However, I believe she is atoning, for it was not so very long ago that I had the pleasure of announcing her marriage to Dr. Fallon, who, by the way, became a devout Catholic.

CHAPTER IX

UPLIFTERS AND INDULGENCES

IN EVERY town there are "uplifters," and the smaller the town, the more prominent these uplifters are. I usually call them "posers." They make the speeches at any public affair; they organize the committees for drives, and when they have fully decided that such-and-such a movement is well for the town, they will push it with a boldness that is surprising. They would have everyone know that "ours is no hick town." Strange as it may seem, they fool others with their posing, and almost always fool themselves, too. They will laugh most heartily at their prototypes thrown upon the screen, and fail entirely to realize that they are the copies with different clothing and varying shades of color. The public, like a flock of sheep, follows these bellwethers without rime or reason.

At one time I was giving a mission in a small place, a university town, if you please, though the university numbered but a handful of stu-

dents, and as is my custom, I answered questions. One afternoon three callers were announced, and I found on entering the pastor's study, three persons of the poser or uplifter type awaiting me.

The spokesman, or more properly the spokeswoman, introduced herself as Miss Penwell, and turning to her companions, introduced them as Dr. Meyers and Miss Flatt. Miss Penwell informed me that Miss Flatt was teacher of history in the university, Dr. Meyers a resident dentist, and she, Miss Penwell, was dean of the women's hall at the university. She was a pompous little body about fifty years of age, dressed very primly in brown, with black hat and black kid gloves, which were quite distinctive, if not conspicuous. She had a hoppy little walk, reminding me strongly of a little brown sparrow. Her smile was "set," as old women might call it, and every gesture and glance seemed to say "I'm it." The doctor was short, stocky, florid, with a youthful face and a crop of bushy white hair. He gave one the impression of wishing to be thought original, but not knowing just how to convey the impression. Miss Flatt was just what her name indicated—flat-faced, flat-chested, and flat-mannered.

It was really an extraordinary group, and I was at a loss to know how to begin the conversation, so I waited for them to take the initia-

ative. Evidently this was just what Miss Penwell wanted, so taking a seat where she could have a clear view of me, in a straight-backed chair, and folding her hands, tightly incased in the black kid gloves, in her lap, she started, or rather asked, with the rising inflection, "You have announced that you would answer any questions concerning your religion, Doctor?"

"Yes, madam, I have," with as engaging a smile as I could assume, "but I am not a doctor of divinity. This title in our Church has quite a significant meaning, and I would be glad if you would call me by that beautiful and familiar name, 'Father.' You know we try to be fathers to everyone in a spiritual sense."

"Pardon me," as the smile became "set." Then with a look which seemed to say "I can read you like a book," she began her preface:

"We fear our questions will be embarrassing to you, but we do not like the way you have been smoothing everything Catholic to the people who have attended your lectures, and at the same time belittling other religions. To be perfectly frank, I personally believe the Catholic Church is a monstrosity."

The other two reminded me of the "other good district fathers," as described so aptly in Will Carleton's "The Schoolmaster's Guests," and their attitude seemed to say "Them's my sentiments, tew." I was quite astounded, and

made no reply as she continued "What is an indulgence? I believe you sell them, and I should like to know the price for one."

At the risk of losing their good will forever, I laughed. I couldn't help it, for she took herself so seriously, and the other two looked so much like trappers stealing up on a vicious animal in a trap. She stiffened in her chair, lost something of her poise, and her eyes snapped.

"I beg your pardon," I finally gurgled, "but the absurdities told about the Catholic Church are so excruciatingly funny to me—you know I have not always been a Catholic—that I find it hard to control myself sometimes."

"Oh," she ejaculated in a caustic tone, "I thought you might be trying to laugh away my question. May I ask if it is too absurd for a reply?"

Being laughed at was apparently something new to her, and I saw that if I was to do any good, I must control myself. I realized that her knowledge of the Catholic Church was as dense as the proverbial London fog, even if she was connected with a university, so I grasped myself with a firm hand, and in as conciliatory a manner as possible, replied:

"Certainly not. My amusement is at the remembrance of what my own attitude used to be toward the Catholic Church. I appreciate

your position thoroughly, and in fact, must compliment you on going to the source for information, and not being satisfied with secondhand tales."

The dentist and Miss Flatt looked at Miss Penwell to get their cue, and I saw I should probably be forgiven.

"Answering the last part of your question first, the price of an indulgence is immense. It is a pure and contrite heart free from all mortal sin."

"But I referred to the price in money," she insisted.

"Then I must tell you that no amount of money, no amount of jewelry or wealth of any sort would or could buy even the smallest indulgence. It is absolutely without price in dollars and cents."

She set her thin lips, and opening a small reticule gingerly, took a Sacred Heart badge from a pocket.

"Then what is this?" she asked. "Isn't this an indulgence. Doesn't it plainly state 'one hundred days' indulgence' on the bottom of it? And do you mean to tell me that you do not sell these things, and that anyone buying it can sin one hundred days? I think, sir, I know too much about the Catholic Church to have anyone pull the wool over my eyes."

She glanced at her companions, and my own gaze following hers, it again encountered the expression "Them's our sentiments, tew."

I have often wondered if we Catholics can begin to realize how some things with which we are perfectly familiar impress an outsider. And when we are asked questions, if we are able to give intelligent answers. Some of us remain silent, fearing we may not explain exactly, and therefore detract from our religion; this attitude is wrong. If one cannot answer a question proposed to him, he should say frankly that he cannot, and refer the questioner to someone, usually a priest, who will always be glad to explain. As I listened to my visitor, I remembered myself once seeing a Sacred Heart badge with the words "one hundred days each time" in the hands of a devout Catholic woman, and supposed it was some kind of talisman, allowing the person to sin for one hundred days without being visited with the wrath of God. The good woman could not explain, though she said it was no such thing, and I took it for granted that the priest would not have outsiders know. I immediately thought "Poor Catholics! How superstitious and ignorant!" never dreaming that the ignorance was mine.

It is hard to be conciliatory and kind to everyone asking questions concerning our faith, and especially is this trying when one is ex-

plaining to teachers of history and the supposedly educated. But I remembered myself, and knew my only hope of enlightenment to this committee was through kindness. I therefore pointed out my attitude toward non-Catholics generally.

I told them that I never spoke in a derogatory manner of Protestants, but while in all honesty I was obliged to say the Catholic Church was the only Church established by Christ, I did it in a way to give as little offense as possible. However, my present visitors were the "uplifters" of the town, and my task was not easy.

Still, they accepted the proofs, from their own Bible, in silence. "The word 'indulgence'" I said, "originally meant 'favor, remission, or forgiveness,' but at present it is commonly used to mean an unlawful gratification."

Picking up Webster's dictionary, I showed them this definition of an indulgence as given by the Catholic Church. "Remission of the punishment due to sins, granted by the Pope of the Church."

"Then it doesn't mean a permission to commit sin?" Miss Penwell asked.

"No indeed, and what is more, no one could possibly gain an indulgence who was in the state of sin. Therefore, when I said the price of an indulgence was a 'pure and contrite heart free from all mortal sin,' I spoke accurately. The

catechism gives the definition 'An indulgence is the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to sin.' And," I continued, "there are two kinds of indulgences—plenary and partial."

"Temporal punishment due to sin," repeated the dentist, evidently thinking it becoming for him to say a word, "What do you mean by temporal punishment?"

"After a Catholic truly repents and the sin is forgiven, it is forgiven for eternity. Yet, punishment is due for that sin, and this temporal, or time punishment, if I may so describe it, is remitted or forgiven through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Nothing was said, so thinking an analogy would perhaps make it clearer, I went on:

"Suppose a man has taken a poison. Unless immediate help comes, he will die from the effects. But a physician comes, administers an antidote, and the man is removed from the danger of death. But the poison, we will suppose, is extremely virulent, and the man's physical system is very much affected. The physician tells him it will be a long time, perhaps many months, before the effects entirely wear away. In a similar manner do the effects of sin remain after the sin itself is forgiven, and it is these effects which the Church, the mouthpiece of God,

remits by indulgences. It makes the effects entirely disappear, a plenary indulgence, or milder and lighter, a partial indulgence."

With a puzzled look, Miss Penwell inquired "But about the hundred days? Does the Church say it will be one hundred days before the effects of sin have been overcome?"

"By no means. I said indulgences are whole or partial, and in order to make it clear, I will take another example. We will suppose a man has committed a crime, and is sentenced to life in the state penitentiary. If the man was a model prisoner, faithful to rules, and showed a sincere sorrow for his misdeed, his good behavior would doubtless be reported to the governor, who grants pardons. The governor remits some of the time, probably saying that for the good work of the prisoner he will remit as much punishment for the crime as the man would suffer in ten years. His good works count for ten years, a partial indulgence, or ten years are forgiven because of the prisoner's sincere sorrow and good works. The man keeps on in his good work, and again the governor remits a part of his time. Finally, the time comes when the governor, for some heroic thing the prisoner has done, gives him a full pardon, and he is set free. The governor has granted a plenary indulgence."

There was silence for a time, for indulgences

were taking on a different aspect from what my callers had expected. Then Miss Flatt spoke for the first time:

“On the badge which Miss Penwell has, does the ‘hundred days’ mean that a hundred days of punishment have been forgiven?”

“In olden times,” I explained, “when a person came to confession and confessed very grievous sins, the confessor often imposed very severe penances. These were long fasts, severe abstinences and long mortifications extending over days, weeks, months, years, or even a lifetime. These penances were mitigated or cancelled entirely by the Church in certain cases, for of course a society which can impose penances can also forgive them. Especially was this done when the penance would harm the physical well-being of a person. Something milder might be substituted. Thus, if one were given a penance extending over a year, the Church has the right to say ‘If you say some prayers, as much penance as you would have done in a week or a month, will be remitted.’ Thus you see on the badge the words ‘Thy kingdom come, one hundred days each time.’ And everyone in the *state of grace*, that is, free from mortal sin, who says that part of the Lord’s prayer, gains as much of an indulgence as one in olden times would gain who had a long penance to say in a hundred days.”

“Can you tell me where in the Bible one may

find that temporal punishment is due for sins after their forgiveness?" asked Miss Flatt in a dull, monotone voice, exactly as many teachers quiz their pupils.

"Yes. Mary, or Miriam, as your Bible gives the name, the sister of Moses, was pardoned the sin which she had committed by murmuring against her brother, and God inflicted on her the penance of leprosy and of seven days' separation from the people, as you will find in the twelfth chapter of Numbers. And again Nathan, the prophet, announced to David that his crime was forgiven, but that he should suffer many chastisements from the hand of God (II Sam. xii). That our Lord has given this power to His Church is clearly seen (Matt. xvi) where He gives the power of binding and loosing."

"If I am not much mistaken," continued Miss Flatt, "D'Aubigne, the historian, tells how indulgences were sold to raise money to build St. Peter's in Rome. Is this true?"

"I will not deny that indulgences were abused, but so is every sacred thing. I recall how boys and girls in school when I was a child, used to gain entrance to a Methodist church, and use the pulpit for a post office to exchange notes. Now the pulpit was not intended for any such thing, and though the Methodist minister's son was involved, the object intended to be sacred was abused. Would you condemn the

Methodist church for this? When Pope Leo X proclaimed the indulgence which afforded Luther a pretext for leaving the Catholic Church, Luther abused a sacred thing.

“The proclamation, or bull, as it is called, offered an indulgence to anyone who would contribute something voluntarily toward the building, but did not exclude the poor. Everyone gained these indulgences who complied with the only indispensable conditions, namely, sincere repentance and confession of their sins. Even D’Aubigne admits ‘in the Pope’s bull something was said of repentance of the heart and confession of the lips.’ Everyone knew that no matter how magnificent the gifts were, one could not gain any share in indulgences unless he was free from sin. Another thing D’Aubigne said is, ‘The hand that delivered the indulgence could not receive the money; that was forbidden under the severest penalties.’ ”

“Well, what of the list of sins and the price to commit them through indulgences,” interpolated Miss Penwell, “which was fastened to the door of St. Gudule’s church in Brussels?”

I almost laughed again, but caught myself in time with a little cough, and replied in all soberness, “That catalog was written in French, and it turned out, after investigation, that the price list was not for sins at all, but the price for chairs.”

There was genuine disappointment in the faces of my callers, and in a measure I was sorry for them. No one is so proud as the ignorant, as I had learned from experience, and I could appreciate their feelings. So I hastened to ask "Have you ever heard how indulgences may be applied to the souls in purgatory?"

"We have heard that they are so applied by Catholics, but we do not understand how it can be," answered Miss Penwell. "How can indulgences benefit the dead?"

"The Church does not claim directly to apply the infinite merits of Jesus and the superabundant merits of His saints to the souls in purgatory, over whom she has no jurisdiction. She can only offer these merits to God by way of suffrage, and leave the application entirely in His hands. Thus, when a person gains a plenary indulgence and offers it up for a soul in purgatory, he is not certain that that particular soul is in purgatory, nor does he know, positively, that God will apply it to that soul. Yet, having confidence in God's goodness, we believe that where the soul is in need, God will apply the indulgence we offer."

"Who was Tetzel?" Miss Flatt again asked in her schoolroom voice.

"Tetzel was a Dominican monk, and was accused by Luther of selling indulgences to enrich himself. This was not true, as you doubtless

know from history. But the Council of Trent says 'Wishing to correct and amend the abuses which have crept into them, and on the occasion of which this signal name of indulgences is blasphemed by heretics, the Holy Synod enjoins in general, by the present decree, that all wicked traffic for obtaining them, which has been the fruitful source of many abuses among the Christian people, should be wholly abolished.'"

Other topics concerning religion came up and I explained as best I could, but whether any impression was made on these "uplifters" or not, I was unable to determine.

"We thank you, Doctor, (she persisted in calling me by that title) for the time you have given us," said Miss Penwell as the trio arose to leave, "and we assure you that we shall look further into the teachings of the Catholic Church."

But just what she meant her words to imply I was unable to determine.

CHAPTER X

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

“**I**F I should become a Catholic, Father, would I be obliged to accept everything the Catholic Church teaches?”

The speaker was a young man, perhaps thirty years of age, with an intelligent face, but one upon which was written “stubborn” as plainly as the pen of nature could write. He was likeable, and yet he was one who would provoke a species of anger in a controversy, for it would be difficult to convince him of something upon which he had made up his mind to the contrary. I find this one of the hardest types to teach, the only exception being, perhaps, one who is indifferent.

I looked at him a moment before answering, and then said “Absolutely. In this you will find the Catholic Church is adamant. The Church is the supreme court in religious matters, and its decision must be taken entirely.”

His face hardened.

“Well then, I could never be a Catholic. Take for instance, this question of prohibition which is so agitating the country. I think the Catholic Church is wrong in saying her members must not countenance it; and if I were a Catholic, I should vote as I think best.”

“Ah yes,” I laughed. “I see what you mean. You think the Catholic Church is a dictator of a man’s politics as well as of his religion. That if the Pope should order a Catholic to vote a democratic ticket, he would be obliged to do so. Or if he told him the earth was flat, he would have to accept it. Am I right?”

“Well, something like that. Of course, I do not think the Church would be so foolish as to command its adherents to accept a theory which was contrary to facts, but being ‘infallible,’ as you call it, does she not claim to know without fear of error what is right in civic and political affairs?”

“By no means,” I responded. “The infallibility which the Church claims is that she cannot make a mistake when she enjoins something touching faith and morals, but never civic affairs.”

He looked at me in surprise.

“For instance, if a man judges prohibition to be right, then he would be obliged to follow his conscience in the matter. Never to my knowledge, has the Church said a single word

either for or against prohibition. The Pope or the Church never dictates our civic or political moves. But when it comes to something of doctrine, then the Church is the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, and since He is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Church cannot make a mistake. Christ promised His Apostles that He would send the Holy Ghost, who would 'be with you to the end of the world.' Therefore, she has the right to speak with authority in regard to any dogma or doctrine."

"Well, how about the 'Blessed Sacrament,' as I believe you call it. If I should become a Catholic, would I have to believe that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is really present under what appears to be bread and wine?"

"Absolutely," I said again.

"Well, whether Elizabeth would marry me or not, I would not become a Catholic by saying I believe in such nonsense. As well tell me that the moon is made of green cheese."

"Nor would I think of baptizing you, whether Elizabeth approves or not, if I was not convinced that you believe *everything* the Church teaches," I replied. And then, with a reminiscent smile, I said "Your words are almost exactly the ones I used when I was studying the Catholic religion. I thought, too, that belief in the Blessed Sacrament was an absurdity."

He looked up in surprise.

"Why, were you not always a Catholic?" he asked.

"No, I was thirty-two years of age when I became a Catholic. And prior to that time I was a bitter anti-Catholic."

His face lost its stubborn, set expression as he asked "But how in the world could you accept that doctrine?"

"The reason I thought I could not accept it was because of my ignorance. I never realized how little I knew concerning religion until this great truth was presented for me to believe."

He made no response, and unconsciously I reached for my favorite pipe. We were in my study, and I am rather fond of my pipe, though I know smoking is condemned by many. The young man looked at me curiously, and I detected a pleased expression on his face as he asked "May I light up also?"

"Most certainly," I responded as I passed my pouch to him. "I really love to see everyone happy if he is not sinning, and I certainly do not consider a pipe for a grown man as sinful."

We got our pipes to going, and I took up the subject of the Real Presence in as easy a way as I knew how. He had been a student at a religious school, and I found him quite conversant with the Bible. I, therefore, asked him

to turn to the Gospel of St. John, sixth chapter, and read the first few verses. It is the account of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. All the four Evangelists give an account of this miracle, but St. John does so in most detail. Our Lord was at Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was the first time He had sent out the Apostles, and they had returned tired out.

It seemed they could not rest because of the crowds who flocked to them to see more miracles, and hear more of the wonders of which our Lord and these men spoke. But Jesus saw how tired the Apostles were, so He said (Mark vi, 31) "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."

So they got into a boat with Him, and crossed to the northeast shore. Doubtless they rowed and drifted slowly, and by the time they had reached the place the people had gone around the lake, and were there to meet them. On seeing the crowd, Jesus took pity on them, for they were like sheep not having a shepherd (Mark vi, 34).

It was the time of the Pasch, the festival day of the Jews, hence the numbers were augmented considerably. At least we are told there were five thousand men, to say nothing of the women and children. As He talked to them, the day passed so quickly that evening was at hand be-

fore anyone apparently noticed it. The situation was exactly favorable to the Miracle Jesus intended to work, so turning to Philip, He asked "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Of course, Philip did not know the question was asked in order to test his faith, so he told our Lord about the boy who had five barley loaves and two fishes, and then asked "But what are these among so many?"

Our Lord asked that the loaves and fishes be brought, and having the people sit down, He gave thanks, and then commanded the disciples to pass them out, when lo, they commenced to multiply, and there was enough to feed the vast throng.

The next day Jesus again spoke of the miracle, for He considered it a favorable time to mention the Blessed Sacrament which He was to institute, for He knew how difficult it would be for many to accept and believe.

"I am the bread of life," He said. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead—I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give *Is My Flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi, 48).

The young man looked at me in a peculiar way as he asked "Do you really think Jesus

meant He would give the people His Flesh to eat? This interpretation seems to me to be absurd."

"Read on," I returned laconically, and he continued with the fifty-second verse: "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us *His Flesh* to eat?'"

"The very question you have asked," I interpolated. "Now see if Jesus meant the words literally. Read on."

"Then Jesus said unto them 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.'

"For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.

"This is that bread which came down from Heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth this bread shall live forever."

My friend had become so interested that he had forgotten his evident intention of withstand-

ing anything which might be said contrary to his views.

“Why,” he exclaimed, “I never paid any attention to this scripture before. To be sure, I have read it, but was taught that Jesus spoke figuratively. Do you not think this possible? Communion in most of the Protestant churches is but a remembrance of the Last Supper. Very few, I think, take the words literally.”

“I know this objection is often brought,” I replied, “but we see how emphatic Christ was in saying His words were literal. ‘Verily, verily,’ He says when the Jews objected. ‘Most emphatically I say unto you that unless you eat the *Flesh* of the Son of Man, and drink His *Blood*,’ does not sound as though it were figurative; and besides, we know that Christ always corrected anything which might be misunderstood. Whenever there might be a doubt, Christ always explained.”

“Can you quote any instances?” asked the young man.

“Yes, let us again refer to the Bible. In the third chapter of St. John we read that Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven; and when He saw His meaning was not understood by Nicodemus, He added ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,’ or that bap-

tism was necessary. Here we see our Lord's intention of making things clear.

“And again when He had warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, and found they had taken an erroneous meaning from His words, as we read in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, He made it plain that He was not referring to the bread of the Pharisees, but to their doctrine, and was warning the disciples against that.”

For a time there was silence, for the young man was thinking deeply.

“Well, it truly is a difficult saying,” he finally remarked, referring to what the Jews had said concerning Christ's true body and blood, “and I am quite in sympathy with the Jews.”

“And are you going to say as many of them did, that you will have nothing further to do with Him?”

He made no direct reply, but asked “Will you please tell me, Father, how our Lord gave His body and blood to His followers? And where in the Bible can it be found?”

“You will find the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, as we call it, in three of the Gospels, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. It was the eve before our Lord's death, and His Apostles were gathered as He had directed. When Jesus came, a very good account of which is recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Mat-

thew, He 'took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; *This Is My Body.*' ”

“And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying 'Drink ye all of it—for this is my *Blood.*' Since all must eat His flesh and drink His blood, He commanded that the Apostles do this; i. e., consecrate His body and blood in the future. This was the first Mass that was said, and the Apostles understood, and ever since that time priests who have been ordained for this purpose have consecrated and given His body and blood to the faithful.”

The young man was looking at me in a strange fashion.

“Do you mean to tell me, Father, that you really and sincerely believe the bread and wine at your service is the body and blood of Jesus Christ? And why is it that only the priest receives the 'blood,' while the rest receive the 'body'?”

His look and tone seemed discourteous. But I realized that with all his stubbornness and apparent dislike for the Church, he was earnest and sincere. So I said:

“If a priest receives Communion outside of Mass, he receives only under the form of bread the same as the lay people, for where the body is, there is also the blood. But if the priest says Mass, he offers the sacrifice of the Cross,

and both species are offered. And I do say most emphatically that I believe with all my heart when I receive the Communion after consecration, either at the sacrifice of the Mass or as Communion, I receive indeed the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I am going to tell you why it was that I, too, was doubtful in the beginning, and I am quite sure that it is the same reason which makes many people doubt. But I do not wish to offend in any way. Be assured of that."

He gazed at me earnestly a minute, and then said, "I will not be offended, and should like to hear it."

"Well, it was ignorance which kept me and which keeps many from accepting literally Christ's words," and I arose and emptied the ashes from my pipe. "Scarcely one of us realizes his depth of ignorance, and this is especially true in religious matters."

I waited for a reply, but since none was forthcoming, I went on, no doubt, he thought, irrelevantly. "What did you have for breakfast this morning?"

"Why," he replied with a surprised note in his voice, "hot cakes, eggs, and coffee."

"And why did you eat breakfast, or why do you eat at all?"

"To keep alive, to keep my strength, and to grow," he said in a perplexed voice.

“Do you mean to tell me that hot cakes, eggs, and coffee will change into something different, or rather, into flesh and blood? Can you believe that?”

“Certainly.”

“Please explain it all to me.”

“Why, it’s through digestion and—and—but you know as well as I do.”

“Yes,” I replied, “but it is really a conversion, isn’t it? And the going over of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is called transubstantiation.”

“What’s that? Is it an English word, and are you trying to show me up as ignorant?” and his smile was rather hard.

“No, my good friend,” I said heartily, “the farthest thing from my mind when I spoke of ignorance, was ignorance of English or anything of that sort. The word is composed of three Latin words—*trans*, a going over from one thing to another; *sub*, which means under; and *stare*, which means to stand. Therefore the word means a going over of the thing which stands under. In this instance it is the conversion of the substance of cakes, eggs, coffee, into the substance of flesh and blood. But it does not explain it. We call it digestion in one case and transubstantiation in the other. It shows that both you and I are very ignorant of the process after all. And it is this kind of ignorance I

meant when I spoke of our not realizing the depth of our ignorance."

"Go on," he said when I ceased speaking. "I am very much interested."

I thought it well to continue along the same line, so I said "What is it that makes this a book?" and I held up a volume which was at hand.

He did not reply, so I asked "Is it the shape, color, weight, printing, or any of those things which might be applied to various objects?"

"No, I don't think it is," he replied slowly.

"Nor is it any of those things which we may apprehend with the senses," I said. "But it is that which stands under any object which makes it just what it is, and nothing more. It is the substance, and strictly speaking, a substance cannot be apprehended with the senses."

"Well, that's a poser!" was his facetious reply.

"If we should put the book into the ground and leave it, it would decay and its substance would become the substance of the earth," I continued, "and there would be conversion again. A seed is put into the earth, and another conversion takes place. It is transformed into a plant."

"But what has all this to do with the body and blood of Christ, of which we were speaking?" he asked.

"It has much to do with it. God by His almighty power can cause this conversion at will. And so, too, He can cause the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and He does so at the words of consecration in the Mass. Jesus said, 'Do this for a commemoration of Me,' and from that time on, priests have been ordained for this purpose. If He can cause hot cakes, eggs, and coffee to become your body and blood, would we dare to say He could not cause bread and wine to become His own body and blood?"

"I've had enough," said the young man. "I believe I'll be frank and acknowledge that I might believe if you continue, so I had better go," and he took his hat and started for the door.

"Good-by," I said, "and bring Elizabeth with you next time; I want her to see the kind of method to use when she is your wife."

The stubborn expression had vanished, and with a most attractive smile he remarked, "Well, if she has you to coach her, I'll give up!"

CHAPTER XI

PURGATORY. PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

LITTLE Gran'ma was dead. Her friends, which included everyone in the neighborhood, came sorrowfully up the walk between the tall Lombardy poplars, the trees Gran'ma and Gran'pa had planted so many years ago when little Gran'ma was a bride. The long shadows stretched uncertainly across the lawn, thrown by a hazy autumn sun, and the somewhat rambling old white house with its green shutters, stood noncommittally above the box-beds of marigolds and asters which grew riotously near the steps.

Inside, the same familiar old weight clock ticked as ever, but with a solemn note which intensified the stillness. The polished tin dipper hung above the cedar water pail in the kitchen, and the chintz lounge in the "back parlor" was adorned as usual with its snowy-white pillow edged with Gran'ma's knitted lace. Everything was homelike, beautiful, dear, and familiar to Gran'ma's friends, for this home had been the refuge of everyone in an extremity, and the tears

started ere the doors were thrown open into the "front parlor," where the little black casket rested above the bright rag carpet, the last piece of Gran'ma's handiwork.

Since Gran'pa's death, many years before, Gran'ma had lived alone, her children having all died, and the nearest relative was a son-in-law, Dr. Merkele, who had come to take charge of the funeral, and settle her affairs.

Exeter was a little place, a small country town, for when the great boom had swept the country, the railroad missed it by some fourteen miles. Hence, there was no Catholic church there, and it was just an accident that I was sent to take charge of the funeral.

I secured a room and took my meals at a place designated as the Cottage Home. Upon inquiry, I found that there was no Catholic family living in the town proper, but a few families were on farms nearby. I was told that it was the sorrow of sorrows to little Gran'ma that she could not go to Mass oftener, and live nearer her beloved Church. The kindly Methodist people offered their church to me for the funeral services, but I thought it better to secure the town hall, which could accommodate the congregation very well.

The villagers stood about curiously, as I erected a temporary altar, and brought out my missionary outfit, and a few of the bolder ones

asked a question now and then. But all were very respectful, and I could see that the love for Gran'ma had worked wonders with these people.

I improvised candlesticks for both the altar and about the bier, and at the appointed time the little black velvet casket was brought in tenderly by six stalwart neighbors. I said the Mass, gave the absolution, and then preached a little sermon, not bearing on Gran'ma's life so much as explaining the Mass, the doctrine of purgatory, etc. Then the body was borne out, the prayers were said, the grave blessed, and little Gran'ma was left alone. But as the little crowd of neighbors turned away, there was scarcely a dry eye among them.

I could not get away until the next day, so Dr. Merkele and myself being the only guests at the Cottage Home, fell to visiting after our dinner had been served. There was a sort of sun porch at one end of the long veranda, and there we found comfortable seats. As the doctor offered me a cigar, he remarked:

“I want to congratulate you, Father, on your kindness and diplomacy toward the Methodist people as well as on the very excellent sermon you gave us. I am a very busy man, and do not go to church often, and have been to a Catholic church only a few times in my life. Laura, my wife, lived only a year after our marriage,

and while she was most faithful to her Church, I did not attend with her often, and so learned very little. But I have always had great respect for your faith."

I thanked him as best I could, and told him perhaps I could appreciate his position, since I had not always been a Catholic.

"Ah," he returned, "I understand something of your broadmindedness then."

I looked at him amusedly. "Now that's rather a doubtful compliment, Doctor," I said.

"I beg your pardon, Father," he hastened to say. "I did not mean the rudeness my words implied. But I do not think the average priest would have grasped the situation so completely as you did, and to an unbiased outsider it looks —well—narrow."

"May I use a quotation, without the slightest degree of offence intended, that 'broadmindedness often indicates shallow-mindedness?' for having been on both sides of the fence, as it were, I believe I am in a position to know. To the non-Catholic it sounds very bigoted to hear one say that the Catholic Church is the only Church Christ founded. Yet, upon examination, it is found to be true, and one would surely not be narrow-minded if he spoke and insisted upon the truth, would he? And if one does not know the truth, it is an indication of little depth if he says an untruth is as good as a truth. Tak-

ing part in any false worship whatever is a species of idolatry for a Catholic, and hence a Catholic would object to the Methodist service or any part of that service. Had I used the Methodist church, I should have looked upon it as a hall or any public building, and not as a church in any sense. You will understand how greatly I appreciate the kindness of the Methodist people, but in fairness to our faith, I feel impelled to put you right in regard to our position."

I was quite blunt in my assertions, and so took pains to tell him of the inception of the Catholic Church. His annoyance passed when he understood, as I could see by his face, and at length he said:

"But it seemed strange to me that you would consign Gran'ma to purgatory, when every evidence about us would show how good and noble she was."

"Yes, I know how that must have appeared to you," I replied, "but if you notice I did not either judge or send little Gran'ma to purgatory. It is true I asked for the prayers of all for her soul, if it should be in purgatory, but I did not say she was there. I do not know; no one knows."

"But purgatory—what is purgatory, anyway?"

"Purgatory," I replied slowly, for I was anx-

ious to give him a clear idea of our belief, and had merely touched upon it in my sermon, "is a middle state to which we believe the average person goes after death, to suffer for a time for venial sins, or for the punishment due to sins after they have been forgiven."

"But is this according to Scripture, Father? I do not think the Bible even mentions such a place."

"It does not mention it by that name, but it is taught very clearly in Holy Scripture," I returned. "The Incarnation and the Trinity are not mentioned by these names, but Christians generally believe in both, do they not?"

"Yes, that is true," he agreed, "but your doctrine—I believe that is what you call it—what is it?"

"I will commence by asking you a question if I may. Do not most Protestants, as a general rule, believe in but two places hereafter—heaven and hell? And do they not teach that the good go to heaven and the bad to hell?"

"Yes, that is their belief," he answered.

"Are you familiar with the Bible, Doctor?"

"Somewhat, though I could hardly pass an examination in it," he laughed.

"Then we will refer to a few texts from the King James version," I said, and excusing myself I went to my room and got the book. Placing it in his hands, I asked him to turn to Revelation xxi, 27.

“Now,” I continued, “from your own experience in the world, can you say that most people, or even a great portion of them, are without spot or blemish? How many of your acquaintances are absolute saints?”

“Not many, I fear,” he smiled.

“On the other hand,” I persisted, “how many are deserving of everlasting punishment? How many are enemies of God or live in mortal sin?”

“Why, not many, or at least so it would appear.”

“Now, if scarcely one of us is absolutely perfect, and if only the soul without blot or stain of any kind can enter heaven, what are you to do with the many of whom you speak? Would you send them to hell?”

“That does place us in a dilemma,” he mused as he thumbed the Bible. I did not interrupt his thoughts for some time, and then asked, as it might seem, irrelevantly:

“When you have a patient who is seriously ill, he does not as a rule recover all at once with his usual health and vigor, does he, Doctor?”

He looked sharply at me.

“No, Father. His ailment may yield to treatment, but, of course, it takes time to convalesce.”

“I bring this question because one who has been in mortal sin is in very much the same state spiritually as a physically ill man. He may receive treatment, that is, go to confession

and receive absolution, but the effects of that sin remain; and just as you impose certain penances or restrictions upon your patient to cure him, so, too, are certain penances placed upon the sin-sick man. In confession or by a perfect act of contrition, his sins are forgiven, but penances follow.

"If you have read the account of how David caused the death of Uriah, as is told in Samuel ii, by having Uriah put in the front of the strongest battle, in order that David might have Uriah's wife, you know that when the great crime of David was accomplished, God forgave him upon his deep repentance, but the effects of that sin remained, and God took the child away from him as his penance.

"Then we read how Mary, the sister of Moses, murmured against her brother, and God forgave her sin, but imposed the penance of her being separated from the people (by leprosy) for seven days. It is in Numbers xii. We believe if a person dies before such penances are accomplished, the soul must undergo punishment, even though the sin is forgiven, and that person must be made spotless and perfect before he can enter into the presence of God. Hence, we say those who die in venial sin, or those not having satisfied for the punishment due to sin, go to purgatory, where they are cleansed."

I had the doctor turn to Matthew xii, 32,

and read: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

"Would this imply a purgatory?" I asked.

The doctor did not reply, so I went on.

"In I Corinthians, iii, 15, we read: 'If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so by fire.' And in Matthew v, 26, we read: 'Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.' Surely, one does not think of heaven as a furnace or a prison, and when one goes to hell, no last farthing can be paid."

"How was it with the Jews before Christ came? Did they also believe in a purgatory?" and the doctor relighted his cigar, which had been neglected.

"Yes, it has always been the universal custom for people to pray for the dead, and the Jews believed in a middle state, though it is not, or was not, called purgatory. Even at Protestant funerals, prayers are said. It is true they are for the living, but almost unconsciously a feeling exists that they are in some way beneficial for the dead.

"At the time of the so-called Reformation, the Bible was altered and revised by men who

did not wish to have this doctrine taught. Hence the books of Machabees are not found in your Bible. But at any rate, Protestants will accept the books of Machabees as historical books, and in II Machabees xii, 43, and following, we find a very interesting account of Judas Machabee finding some of the pagan idols in the coats of his slain soldiers. ‘Making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection.’”

“Well, Father, is it true, as is often said, that priests know where the soul is, and how far out of purgatory? You know perhaps that some people think ‘praying souls out of purgatory’ is the most lucrative office of a priest?” and he gave me an apologetic glance.

I smiled, remembering how I used to hear the same rumors. It was reassuring to the doctor, for he at once apologized.

“No,” I said, “all the money in the world would not get a soul out of purgatory. Neither does any human being know where the soul actually is, since we are not judges. But we continually pray for the dead, and perform good works, hoping they may merit favor in some small degree in the sight of God for the welfare of the souls in purgatory. We do believe the Mass is the most powerful means of grace, for

it is the unbloody sacrifice of the Cross. The priest says Mass daily, and people often give him what is called a "stipend"—some offering. But this is in no way as payment for his prayers or for the Mass. It is a help toward the support of the priest, just as you give your minister gifts toward his support.

"If one goes to hell," I continued, "'the fire that shall never be quenched' is his portion, and prayers would be of no use to him. Hence the prayers are said for those who are detained because they are not without spot or blemish."

"Do you know, I think the doctrine of purgatory is consoling," said the doctor after a pause. "And reasonable, too," he added.

"It is consoling and reasonable, Doctor, and what can you imagine as a greater incentive to good living than the belief that every good thing one does may be of benefit to the soul of a loved one? If you believe the souls of little Gran'ma, or your wife, Laura, could be helped by your prayers, and every good action you do, would you not seek occasions for doing good?"

"Yes, to both your questions, Father," said the doctor with much feeling. And handing the Bible to me, he excused himself and went away.

I wondered if he went to commune with God and pray.

CHAPTER XII

CATHOLICS AND THE BIBLE

SHORTLY after my ordination I was assigned to a “parish” (I put the word in quotation marks, for the reason will soon become apparent). At the poorest point of this parish there was a building, a so-called church, erected years before, which was almost inaccessible in the winter, and where I often had but six or eight souls at Mass. To the north and in an opposite direction there was a small town where I said Mass, in a lodge hall, on an improvised altar. In this place I had about ten families. Between these two places was the abode of the priest, with the chapel occupying the front room, which measured twelve by twenty feet. The rambling old house had been built in the early days, and had so many additions to the original structure that it was called “The House of Seven Gables” by the town wags, though it had many more gables than seven. However, I was happy, and shall never know keener joys and sorrows, ac-

companied by hopes and disappointments, than I found here in my first "parish."

One afternoon I answered a knock at the door—I had not reached the luxury of a house-keeper—and opened it to the finest specimen of physical manhood one would wish to see. He was big, broad-shouldered, and with a pleasing manly face that immediately attracted one. Bowing ingratiatingly, he announced himself a missionary, of course thinking he had come to a private house.

"Well," I said, "I am something of a missionary myself. What persuasion do you represent?"

Somewhat surprised, he answered, "I belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints," in a voice in keeping with his general appearance.

"Bless my heart!" I ejaculated. "This is indeed a coincidence. The two extremes have met. I am told you may have all the wives you want, while I cannot have any. Come in and let us compare notes," and I led the way to my little box of a parlor.

Looking about, he spied the crucifix on the wall and in some trepidation asked, "What are you? That is, what church do you represent?"

"I represent the Church of Jesus Christ of Early as well as Latter Day Saints," I responded with a smile. "I am a Catholic priest."

He sat down, looking at me the while with a mingling of surprise, curiosity, and, I thought, pleasure. My looks must have reflected his own, for he laughed as he continued, "Well, you are the first Catholic priest to whom I have ever spoken."

"And you are the first Mormon, if that is the correct word to use, I have ever had the pleasure of seeing so far as I know. And I know it is going to be a pleasure to me also," I rejoined heartily.

"I—did not know Catholic priests ever talked—that is—talked as you do," he stammered. "I thought they held themselves aloof and would not encourage conversation. Are you a *Roman Catholic*, may I ask?"

"Yes, terrifying as it might be to some, I am a real Catholic priest, and the head of our Church is the Pope of Rome," and I sat down opposite him in my desk chair. Each was curious as to the other's belief, and the questions and answers were mutual. Of course the Bible furnished the background for both of us, and finally I asked, "Do you know the history of the Bible?"

"Our religion is founded on the Bible," he replied, "with the Book of Mormon as a supplement. But I am not as well versed in its history—that is, the Bible—as I should be."

“I like your frankness,” I returned, “for men swear by the Bible, and yet have no idea whence it came.”

“Pardon me, Elder, but do I understand you to say that Catholics believe in and practice the teachings of the Bible?” and his expression betrayed astonishment.

“As no other religion,” I responded. “And if you have no objection, my title is ‘Father,’ a beautiful and familiar name, I think.”

“But,” with a twinkle in his eye, “the Bible, which you say you believe, commands us to call no man ‘Father.’”

“Just as we are commanded to call no man ‘Master,’ or ‘Mister,’ a little farther on in the same chapter,” and I smiled at his expression.

He made no response, but I noticed that he did not give me any title thereafter. It is difficult for non-Catholics to grow accustomed to the name of “Father,” and many wonder if they should do so.

Presently we touched on the Bible as the sole rule of faith, and he asked “Do we not read in Mark xvi, 16, ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned?’ And if so, what are we to believe, if not the Bible?”

“Yes,” thoughtfully, “faith is absolutely necessary for salvation, but will you please tell me

what kind of faith one must have? Is it human faith, that is, faith in man's word, or faith in God?"

"Why, faith in God, certainly," he answered readily.

"Exactly," I agreed, "and that faith compels us to believe *all* God has taught, does it not?"

"Surely," he replied.

"Therefore, He must give everyone the means of knowing what He has taught, must He not?"

"Surely," he replied again, "for He condemns all who do not believe according to the text just quoted."

"But do you think this means must have been within the reach of everyone at all times? And must it not be adapted to the capacity of everyone? Surely not only the educated and brilliant scholars are entitled to salvation."

"I agree with you," he answered.

"You will agree with me also in saying the means of salvation must be infallible? One where there is no chance for doubt?"

"Yes," he said slowly, "and this means is the Bible, and with us, the Book of Mormon."

"The Book of Mormon, I believe, was not available until about 1830, so we will not discuss that. Whatever means that book may hold, it does not come up to the requirements just laid down. Man did not have it for eighteen centuries."

Fortunately I had just been reading Rev. Arnold Damen's Church or Bible, and the answers to his questions were quite apropos. He did not reply, so I continued:

"Christ wrote nothing so far as we know, and of course there was nothing of the New Testament until after His death. St. Matthew, the first gospel, was not even written until seven years, or more, after Christ's ascension into heaven. St. Mark was written not earlier than ten years after His ascension; St. Luke about twenty-five years after, and St. John not until about sixty-three years after the ascension."

I waited for comment, but my visitor said nothing.

"If the Bible were to be the only rule of faith, what were all the people living during that time to do?"

"But Christ had said (Matt. xxviii, 19-20) 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.'"

"Ah yes, that is true, but you have said the Bible was to be the instructor, and there was no Bible."

"Well," in a perplexed tone, "if as you say the Church believes and teaches the Bible, how

do you account for the Christian religion during the time the New Testament at least was not in existence? I am sincere in asking. I would be glad if you would tell me something about the Bible, from a Catholic standpoint."

His frankness was refreshing, so I said:

"St. Matthew was the first to write concerning Christ or Christianity. His is the first Gospel. St. John wrote the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation, as you call it, about sixty or sixty-five years after Christ had left the earth, so Christ's religion had lived sixty years anyway before one could have access to the Scriptures. Now, if there were no other way of learning the precepts of Christ, then Christianity must have died almost as soon as born.

"But Christ said 'Teach all nations,' not 'write books or Bibles and give to each one,' and that teaching we Catholics call 'tradition,' which Webster defines as 'knowledge or belief transmitted without the aid of written memorials.' Hence, while the Catholic Church esteems the Bible more than any sect or other denomination, it does not say it was or is the only means of propagating Christianity."

My visitor did not seem inclined to ask questions, so I continued:

"But it was more than three hundred years before anyone knew just what the Bible really

was. So many books and writings were extant that it would be impossible to know what really belonged to the Sacred Scriptures. While the Apostles were still alive, there were many false gospels. For instance, there was the gospel of Simon, the gospel of Mary, the gospel of Barnabas, etc. Discussions arose as to which gospel should take precedence; the Gospel of Matthew or Simon; the Gospel of Mark or Mary; of Luke and John, or the Infancy of Jesus and Nicodemus.

“The same in regard to the epistles. Some were and some were not authentic. So no one knew just what constituted the Bible.”

“But how did they find out?” asked my friend, very much interested.

“It was through the Church which Christ established on the Rock, St. Peter, the Catholic Church. In the fourth century, the Pope of Rome, the head of this Church, and the successor of St. Peter, called all the bishops of the world together in council, and in that council it was decided just what books were inspired or should belong to the Bible as we now have it.”

“But if it was man that decided, have we any assurance that it is right?”

“A very pertinent question,” I said. “For we agreed at first, if the means of knowing the truth is not infallible, that is, incapable of error, it would be a useless means. But Jesus

looked out for this. When He came to His Apostles in His glorified body, as we are told (Matt. xxviii, 19-20) as you quoted, He said to them that He had all power from God and bade them to 'teach all nations,' and baptize them, and promised '*And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*' So, it was the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of Truth,' whom Christ had promised to send to guide His Church, who preserved that Church from making mistakes and makes its pronouncements infallible, that is, without fear of error."

In a moment I went on "If, as Protestantism teaches generally, we are to draw our religion from the Bible and interpret it ourselves, then all those living for at least the first three hundred years of the Christian era must have been lost. But this is not all. We are so accustomed to seeing books of all descriptions everywhere, we are apt to think it was always so. But until printing was invented, a person who owned a book, even of the most insignificant kind, was considered wealthy. For a book at that time would cost what would be thousands of dollars to us now. Suppose a Bible should cost three thousand dollars. How many of us would have one, and how many of us would be saved if that were the only means?"

Here my caller interrupted with a very sensible remark.

"That is the reason we are often told the Catholics were so afraid of the loss of the Bible that they kept it chained to a post."

"Yes, that old story of the Bible being chained to a post of the church, is favorable to the Catholic Church and its veneration for the Bible, if one only realizes the great value of the Bible at that time. It was left for all to read, who could do so. Why do we find the telephone directory tied to a post in the booths and other places? Is it because the telephone company fears someone will learn the address and telephone numbers of its patrons?"

Both of us laughed at the absurdity. Yet how often this chaining of the Bible has been told, and the Church condemned because it dreaded that the truth contained therein should be known.

"I suppose that you contend that the Holy Ghost makes your Church and its ways of teaching infallible still?"

"Certainly. And the fact of its existence, the fact that it teaches today the same doctrine as it did in the beginning, gives weight to this belief even by those outside the fold. You said the means of obtaining truth in regard to faith must be infallible, which reminds me of something I read not long ago."

Taking a book of clippings, I found an account of a gathering of ministers of all denomina-

nations who had met to determine whether there should be corrections made in the Bible or not. One of the ministers asserted that the Bible, as it is now, contains not a few, but thousands of errors and mistakes. Just recently we heard of a convention of a certain denomination advocating a Bible which would teach their tenets 'with a greater emphasis.' This would indicate that the Holy Ghost was incompetent to preserve the truth. "So, taken all in all, the Bible as the Protestants have it, is anything but infallible. Of course, you know that the Bible was preserved for Christianity during the so-called Dark Ages by the Catholic Church?"

He looked up surprised.

"No, I did not. But I am learning—to think—to think about things in a new way." Then, musingly, "I always thought of the Dark Ages as a time when Christianity just about died from the face of the earth. I am sure many Protestants think the Bible was as prevalent then as now."

"Yes, but it was during that age—the age of faith we prefer to call it—that the monks assumed the great task of writing Bibles. We must remember there was no such thing as paper, but skins of animals had to be prepared, a long and slow process in itself, ink had to be manufactured, and in the meantime the monks had to live and also care for the poor."

“Is the Catholic Bible the same as the one Protestants use?”

“No, and I think you will realize from what has been said that the Catholic Douay version must be the authentic version. In your Protestant Bible, seven complete books have been left out. That is, seven books which were always in the Bible until the so-called Reformation. These are Tobias, Baruch, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, I Machabees and II Machabees. Seven chapters have also been left out of the Book of Esther, and sixty-six verses of the third chapter of Daniel. The criticisms of Luther, Calvin, and other ‘reformers’ will show the insidious minds of these men. The religion they hoped to establish, and the doctrines they hoped to inculcate could not be consistent with the Bible as it was; therefore, parts were ‘cut out,’ as is so aptly expressed by the street urchin. Instances are also given where words were added to make the meaning coincide with some doctrines of man’s choice. Thus Luther, not being pleased with St. Paul’s ‘we are justified by faith,’ and wishing to discount the good works, since they savored of ‘Popish superstition’ added one word, ‘only.’ The passage then read ‘We are justified by faith only.’ ”

“Do you know anything about the Book of Mormon?” asked my friend as he began to take

tracts from his pocket. "I should like to know what you have to say concerning that."

"Very little," I replied, "except that the 'plates' were discovered by Joseph Smith, as your church tells us, that they were revealed by Maroni, an angel from God, I suppose you would say. But this is refuted if you believe in the Bible, for St. Paul says in his epistle to the Galatians (1-8) 'But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'"

"I suppose you will say because the Catholic Church is infallible, it has the right to interpret the Scriptures from the text we have used 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, etc.,' and Christ's promise to 'be with you alway, even to the end of the world,' prevents it from making a mistake?"

"Yes, just as every country has a supreme court or tribunal to interpret matters of law, so does the Catholic Church claim through the authority of Christ, the right to interpret holy scriptures without fear of mistake. And," I added, "it is a wonderful thing in a world like ours to have positive assurance of this. Protestants generally allow each one to interpret Scripture to suit himself, and this is, of course, destructive of anything positive."

"Well," he said as he laid the tracts upon

the desk and took the ones I had placed there for him, "I find I must study the Bible and its history. I do not pretend to know everything about religion. I have certainly enjoyed my visit with you." Then with a peculiar smile he added "I like your certainty about your faith, and after all, perhaps we are not so far apart, even if I may have the wives I want, and you may have none."

(Note: He had explained that while they believed in plural marriages, they did not practice it, since it was forbidden by the Federal Government.)

CHAPTER XIII

MIXED MARRIAGES

“MR. JOHN SYLVESTER” I read on the card which Nora handed me one afternoon shortly after luncheon. There was no address, and nothing to hint what the business or profession of my caller might be; yet the name had a familiar sound, and I cudgeled my brain as I went to the study.

He stood beside the table in a graceful attitude, tall, slender, and dark; his poise indicated gentlemanly breeding, with amenities to the usages of polite society. But I was sure I had never seen him before. His handclasp was strong, and with a deference which was charming, he waited for me to be seated before he took the chair I indicated.

“I have come to you, Father,” he said in a voice nicely modulated, “because Miss Stella Graves, whom I hope to marry, insisted upon it. I am not a Catholic, and she wished me to talk with you before she would give me her final

answer," and his white teeth showed in an amused smile.

I knew him now as the fiance of Stella Graves, my organist. I had never met him, but I recalled having heard his name.

"I suppose it seems a sort of strange thing for a young lady to refer her fiance to her pastor first, does it not?" I asked, as I studied him to ascertain his real character under the polish of his bearing.

"Well, I know the Catholics are very strict in regard to their religion. I told Stella I would not become a Catholic, but have no prejudices against the Church. But she insisted upon my having a talk with you."

"I am glad that my efforts are bearing fruit," I replied, "for I do ask the young people to bring those with whom they are keeping company here to learn something about Catholicity before everything is settled. Of course, I mean where a mixed marriage, as we call it, is contemplated. Often the stranger, when he learns what the Catholic Church really is, accepts the faith, and then such marriages are apt to be happy."

"Will you tell me, Father, how a Catholic marriage differs from a Protestant marriage?" he asked in a frank manner which was very attractive.

"Well," I began hesitatingly, for I was not

sure that he would take my explanation aright, "Protestants generally deny the sacramental character of matrimony. For the bond of marriage was restored by Christ to its original unity and indissolubility."

"Well, just what is a sacrament, Father?" he asked.

"A sacrament," I replied, "is an outward sign, instituted by Christ to give grace. This is the concise definition given in a child's catechism. He made it an outward sign of inward grace, by making it a representation of His own union with the Church. St. Paul says (Eph. v, 23), 'The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.'

"Now, matrimony could not represent the union of Christ with the Church, and on this very ground impose special obligations on man and wife, unless it conferred grace upon them to fulfill these obligations."

He made no comment, so I continued, "Christ restored marriage to its original unity, for pointing to its divine institution, He says, 'Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female? And they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.' " (Matt. xix, 4-6.)

I then proceeded to impress upon him the indissolubility by turning to the tenth chapter of St. Mark and reading from the second to the

twelfth verses. The Pharisees had asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" And Christ answered by asking another question. What did Moses command you? Who said: Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away. To whom, Jesus, answering said: "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you that precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife. And they two shall be in one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. And in the house again His disciples asked Him again of the same matter. And He saith to them: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another she committeth adultery."

"Hence Protestants are continually trying to cope with the divorce evil, but unsuccessfully. If marriage is looked upon as a mere contract, it is placed upon the same plane as a contract involving property or any chattels. But it is not so with Catholics, who believe it was divinely instituted by Christ. However, it is not so much for the Catholic party's sake that I wish to instruct the non-Catholic, for usually the Catholic knows of the dangers, but for the non-Catholic's sake."

He looked up somewhat surprised.

“I do not see how it will benefit me, Father.”

“Let us see,” I continued. “Do you know you have to sign a promise or agreement with the Catholic Church before the ceremony can be performed?”

“Why no,” he answered. “What kind of an agreement?”

“I will show you a blank application for a dispensation for a ‘mixed marriage,’ as we usually call it, as I have said,” and I took a blank from my desk drawer and handed it to Mr. Sylvester to read. He read aloud:

“I, the undersigned, about to marry (Name of Catholic party) solemnly promise that I will never, in any way, interfere with (him or her) in the exercise of (his or her) religion as a Catholic, and that if God blesses our union with children, they shall all be baptized and reared as Catholics. I also promise that no other ceremony than that performed by the Catholic priest shall take place.”

Catholic party.....

Witnesses

.....
Name

Date

Place

His face cleared. “Why, I do not object to signing this promise,” he said. “I am not at

all bigoted," and he meant what he said, as could be clearly seen.

"But if you were to sign a contract for—what is your business?" I asked.

"I am the principal of the Jefferson school at M——" he replied.

"Well, when you signed the contract for your school, you knew what you were signing and its definite demands, did you not?"

"Why, certainly," he replied.

"Was it satisfactory?"

"All except a clause referring to my smoking. I considered that a personal matter."

I did not ask the outcome, and as he seemed to be thinking, I did not interrupt him. Finally he asked "What do you mean, Father, by 'sacramental character?'"

"A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace," I repeated, wishing to impress upon him the significance of a sacrament. "He made it a sign of inward grace by making it representative of His own union with the Church. St. Paul says 'For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church—Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything—Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.' " (Eph. v, 25.)

After a little I continued "Now matrimony

could not represent the union of Christ with the Church, and on this very ground impose special obligations on man and wife, unless it also conferred grace upon them to fulfill these obligations. The Church has always regarded matrimony as a sacred sign productive of grace —as a sacrament.”

He made no remark, so I said: “To return to the contract or promise. Do you not think it to your advantage to inquire about it? I can see you are open-minded and unprejudiced, but I realize you know little about the teachings and practices of the Church. Do you not think it a more important contract than one for teaching school?”

“Yes, it is,” he agreed.

“And am I not right in saying it is more for the non-Catholic’s good than the Catholics, though of course it is beneficial for both?”

He agreed with me again, and I gave him some books and suggested that he go to the pastor of the Catholic Church in M—— for his instructions. He went to the pastor, and from all accounts was quite zealous. As the wedding day approached, the promises were signed, and the marriage took place.

Stella Graves was a quiet girl, very religious and devout, but the match seemed an ideal one. John Sylvester never interfered with her in her religious practices, gave freely toward the sup-

port of the Church, and the young couple seemed extremely happy. In fact, they were pointed out as an example of 'mixed marriages' by the careless, and it was difficult to show that it was exceptional.

Time passed and John and Stella looked forward to the time when their home should be blessed with a little one. Only God knows the great happiness of a prospective mother at such a time. John was gentleness itself, and the care of his young wife was really touching.

At length Stella went to the hospital. John was most anxious and his anxiety increased when word was received that it was a very difficult case. He walked the floor, and his lips twitched in a sort of dumb prayer. Then a nurse came and told him they despaired of Stella's life. He saw the physician and asked in a tense voice if there was nothing to be done.

The Doctor hesitated, for John's anguish was so apparent, but finally said "There is just the smallest chance of saving the mother's life, but it would be at the expense of the child's. We would have to perform the operation known as 'craniotomy.' The child's life would be sacrificed, but there is the very slightest chance that the mother's might be saved. We have told your wife, and she has asked to see Father Thomas first. He is with her now."

John grasped at the hope as a drowning man

would grasp at a straw. "Never mind the child," he said, "but for God's sake save my wife."

The priest came to the door and beckoned John to enter. As gently as she could, Stella told him the decision of the Church—for the Church has no authority whatever to permit taking the life of anyone, even an unborn child. Father Thomas came up and sympathetically laid a hand on John's arm. John's suffering was intense, and perhaps lent anger to his voice as he shook the hand from him, and said in a cold steely tone: "If that is the decision of the Church, I shall not abide by it. She is my wife. The Church has nothing to say, and I shall insist upon saving her life at any cost."

Here was a dilemma indeed. Stella knew that her life hung by a thread. In all probability she would soon face her God. On the one hand she loved her husband, dreaded to displease him; on the other, she loved her God, would she dare displease Him? Eternity was opening to her. Should she obey God or man? How little she had dreamed of this when she consented to a 'mixed marriage.' "John would never interfere with her in the practice of her religion," she told herself then. "He promised, and the promise was written."

"I will never in any way interfere with her in the exercise of her religion as a Catholic."

John thought it meant he would let her go to Mass and would support her Church. It made no difference that John was honest, unprejudiced, even kindly disposed. No—but now it was a choice between John and God. Which should it be?

The sacrament of matrimony is the sacrament which unites a Christian man and woman in lawful marriage, the little catechism tells us.

Every Christian knows the command “Thou shalt not kill,” and the Church applies this to every human being. God alone is the Master of life and death. Marriage is primarily for the procreation of the human race and everything else is secondary.

John was not a Catholic, and his education was on different lines from that of a Catholic. Scarcely any society or sect dares to oppose the fast-increasing sentiment toward the limitations of families, and like Christ among the pagans and ungodly of His day, His Church is hated because of her unyielding stand for the sacredness of the family.

It is true that for the individual it sometimes works a hardship, but so do many man-made laws which must be observed for the good of society. And no one is created for time but for eternity. Many things which the Church teaches require sacrifice, yes, heroic sacrifice on the part of the individual, but history, since the

Church's establishment has taught us to recognize the fact that the Church is divinely established and that her laws are always for the best. Otherwise she would not have lived—she would not have been divinely established.

John did not realize that the instructions proposed before his marriage were for his own good, he did not have the grace which God so willingly gives to a sincere Catholic, and now he could not understand that expediency was of no avail.

For each one of us will come the last things—Death, Judgment, Heaven, or Hell. Please God, we may, one and all, be able to say with earnestness, sincerity, and truth, the acts of Faith, Hope, Love, and Contrition.

THE END

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